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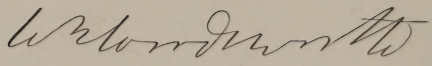

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

WITH A MEMOIR

SEVEN VOLUMES IN THREE

VOL. I.

BOSTON
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If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content.—
The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from the zenith dart their beams.
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness,)
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire, on the ridge
Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
Among the branches of the leafless trees;
All are the undying offspring of one Sire:
Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content.

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SKETCH OF WORDSWORTH'S LIFE.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH was born at Cockermouth in Cumberland on the 7th of April, 1770, the second of five children. His father was John Wordsworth, an attorney-at-law, and agent of Sir James Lowther, afterwards first Earl of Lonsdale. His mother was Anne Cookson, the daughter of a mercer in Penrith. His paternal ancestors had been settled immemorially at Penistone in Yorkshire, whence his grandfather had emigrated to Westmoreland. His mother, a woman of piety and wisdom, died in March, 1778, being then in her thirty-second year. His father, who never entirely cast off the depression occasioned by her death, survived her but five years, dying in December, 1783, when William was not quite fourteen years old.

The poet's early childhood was passed partly at Cockermouth, and partly with his maternal grandfather at Penrith. His first teacher appears to have been Mrs. Anne Birkett, a kind of Shenstone's Schoolmistress, who practised the memory of her pupils, teaching them chiefly by rote, and

not endeavoring to cultivate their reasoning faculties, a process by which children are converted from natural logicians into impertinent sophists. Among his schoolmates here was Mary Hutchinson, who afterwards became his wife.

In 1778, he was sent to a school founded by Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York, in the year 1585, at Hawkshead in Lancashire. Hawkshead is a small market-town in the vale of Esthwaite, about a third of a mile northwest of the lake. Here Wordsworth passed nine years, among a people of simple habits and scenery of a sweet and pastoral dignity. The boys were boarded among the dames of the village, thus enjoying a freedom from scholastic restraints, which could be nothing but beneficial in a place where the temptations were only to sports that hardened the body, while they fostered a love of nature in the spirit and habits of observation in the mind. Wordsworth's ordinary amusements here were hunting and fishing, rowing, skating, and long walks around the lake and among the hills. His life as a schoolboy was favorable also to his poetic development, in being identified with that of the people among whom he lived. Among men of simple habits, and where there are small diversities of condition, the feelings and passions are displayed with less restraint, and the young poet grew acquainted with that primitive human basis of character where the Muse finds firm foothold, and to which

he ever afterward cleared his way through all the overlying drift of conventionalism.

At school he wrote some task-verses on subjects imposed by the master, and also some voluntaries of his own, equally undistinguished by any peculiar merit. But he seems to have made up his mind as early as in his fourteenth year to become a poet. In commenting, sixty years afterward, on a couplet in one of these poems, —

> "And, fronting the bright west, the oak entwines
> Its darkening boughs and leaves in stronger lines," —

he says: "This is feebly and imperfectly expressed, but I recollect distinctly the very spot where this first struck me. . . . . The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them, and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency."

The great event of Wordsworth's school-days was the death of his father, who left what may be called a hypothetical estate, consisting chiefly of claims upon the first Earl of Lonsdale, the payment of which, though their justice was acknowledged, that nobleman contrived in some unexplained way to elude as long as he lived. In October, 1787, he left school for St. John's College, Cambridge. He was already, we are told, a fair

Latin scholar, and had made some progress in mathematics. The earliest books we hear of his reading were Don Quixote, Gil Blas, Gulliver's Travels, and the Tale of a Tub; but at school he had also become familiar with the works of some English poets, particularly Goldsmith and Gray, of whose poems he had learned many by heart. What is more to the purpose, he had become, without knowing it, a lover of Nature in all her moods, and the same mental necessities of a solitary life which compel men to an interest in the transitory phenomena of scenery, had made him also studious of the movements of his own mind, and the mutual interaction and dependence of the external and internal universe.

Doubtless his early orphanage was not without its effect in confirming a character naturally impatient of control, and his mind, left to itself, clothed itself with an indigenous growth, which grew fairly and freely, unstinted by the shadow of exotic plantations. It has become a truism, that remarkable persons have remarkable mothers; but perhaps this is chiefly true of such as have made themselves distinguished by their industry, and by the assiduous cultivation of faculties in themselves of only an average quality. It is rather to be noted how little is known of the parentage of men of the first magnitude, how often they seem in some sort foundlings, and how early an apparently adverse destiny begins the culture of those who

are to encounter and master great intellectual or spiritual experiences.

Of his disposition as a child, little is known, but that little is characteristic. He himself tells us that he was "stiff, moody, and of violent temper." His mother said of him that he was the only one of her children about whom she felt any anxiety, — for she was sure that he would be remarkable for good or evil. Once, in resentment at some fancied injury, he resolved to kill himself, but his heart failed him. "On another occasion," he says, "while I was at my grandfather's house at Penrith, along with my eldest brother Richard, we were whipping tops together in the long drawing-room, on which the carpet was only laid down on particular occasions. The walls were hung round with family pictures, and I said to my brother, 'Dare you strike your whip through that old lady's petticoat?' He replied, 'No, I won't.' 'Then,' said I, 'here goes,' and I struck my lash through her hooped petticoat, for which, no doubt though I have forgotten it, I was properly punished. But, possibly from some want of judgment in punishments inflicted, I had become perverse and obstinate in defying chastisement, and rather proud of it than otherwise." This last anecdote is as happily typical as a bit of Greek mythology which always prefigured the lives of heroes in the stories of their childhood. Just so do we find him afterward striking his defiant lash through the

hooped petticoat of the artificial style of poetry and proudly unsubdued by the punishment of the Reviewers.

Of his college life the chief record is to be found in "The Prelude." He did not distinguish himself as a scholar, and if his life had any incidents, they were of that interior kind which rarely appear in biography, though they may be of governing influence upon the life. He speaks of reading Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton while at Cambridge,* but no reflection from them is visible in his earliest published poems. The greater part of his vacations was spent in his native Lake-country, where his only sister, Dorothy, was the companion of his rambles. She was a woman of large natural endowments, chiefly of the receptive kind, and had much to do with the formation and tendency of the poet's mind. It was she who called forth the shier sensibilities of his nature, and taught an originally harsh and austere imagination to surround itself with fancy and feeling, as the rock fringes itself with ferns. She was his first public, and belonged to that class of prophetically appreciative temperaments whose apparent office it is to cheer the early solitude of original minds with messages from the future. Through the greater part of his life she continued to be a kind of poetical conscience to him.

* Prelude, Book III. He studied Italian also at Cambridge; his teacher, whose name was Isola, had formerly taught the poet Gray.

Wordsworth's last college vacation was spent in a foot journey upon the Continent. In January, 1791, he took his degree of B. A., and left Cambridge. During the summer of this year he visited Wales, and, after declining to enter upon holy orders under the plea that he was not of age for ordination, went over to France in November, and remained during the winter at Orleans. Here he became intimate with the republican General Beaupuis, with whose hopes and aspirations he ardently sympathized. In the spring of 1792 he was at Blois, and returned thence to Orleans, which he finally quitted in October for Paris. He remained here as long as he could with safety, and at the close of the year went back to England, thus probably escaping the fate which soon after overtook his friends the Brissotins.

As hitherto the life of Wordsworth may be called a fortunate one, not less so in the training and expansion of his faculties was this period of his stay in France. Born and reared in a country where the homely and familiar nestles confidingly amid the most savage and sublime forms of nature, he had experienced whatever impulses the creative faculty can receive from mountain and cloud and the voices of winds and waters, but he had only known man as an actor in fireside histories and tragedies, for which the hamlet supplied an ample stage. In France he first felt the authentic beat of a nation's heart; he was a specta-

tor at one of those dramas where the terrible foot fall of the Eumenides is heard nearer and nearer in the pauses of the action; and he saw man such as he can only be when he is vibrated by the orgasm of a national emotion. He sympathized with the hopes of France and of mankind deeply, as was fitting in a young man and a poet; and if his faith in the gregarious advancement of men was afterward shaken, he only held the more firmly by his belief in the individual, and his reverence for the human as something quite apart from the popular and above it. Wordsworth has been unwisely blamed, as if he had been recreant to the liberal instincts of his youth. But it was inevitable that a genius so regulated and metrical as his, a mind which always compensated itself for its artistic radicalism by an involuntary leaning toward external respectability, should recoil from whatever was convulsionary and destructive in politics, and above all in religion. He reads the poems of Wordsworth without understanding, who does not find in them the noblest incentives to faith in man and the grandeur of his destiny, founded always upon that personal dignity and virtue, the capacity for whose attainment alone makes universal liberty possible and assures its permanence.

In December, 1792, Wordsworth had returned to England, and in the following year published "Descriptive Sketches," and "An Evening Walk."

He did this, as he says in one of his letters, to show that, although he had gained no honors at the University, he *could* do something. They met with no great success, and he afterward corrected them so much as to destroy all their interest as juvenile productions, without communicating to them any of the merits of maturity. During the same year (1793) he wrote, but did not publish, a political tract, in which he avowed himself opposed to monarchy and to the hereditary principle, and desirous of a republic, if it could be had without a revolution. He probably continued to be all his life in favor of that ideal republic "which never was on land or sea," but fortunately he gave up politics that he might devote himself to his own nobler calling, to which politics are subordinate, and for which he found freedom enough in England as it was. But meanwhile, Want, which makes no distinctions of Monarchist or Republican, was pressing upon him. The debt due to his father's estate had not been paid, and Wordsworth was one of those rare idealists who esteem it the first duty of a friend of humanity to live for, and not on, one's neighbor. He at first proposed establishing a periodical journal to be called "The Philanthropist," but luckily went no further with it, for the receipts from an organ of opinion which professed republicanism, and at the same time discountenanced the plans of all existing or defunct republicans.

would have been necessarily scanty. There being no appearance of any demand, present or prospective, for philanthropists, he tried to get employment as correspondent of a newspaper Here also it was impossible that he should succeed; he was too great to be merged in the editorial We, and had too well defined a private opinion on all subjects to be able to express that average of public opinion which constitutes able editorials. But so it is that to the prophet in the wilderness the birds of ill omen are already on the wing with food from heaven; and while Wordsworth's relatives were getting impatient at what they considered his waste of time, while one thought he had gifts enough to make a good parson, and another lamented the rare attorney that was lost in him,* the prescient muse guided the hand of Raisley Calvert while he wrote the poet's name in his will for a legacy of £900. By the death of Cal-

* Speaking to one of his neighbors in 1845, he said, "that, after he had finished his college course, he was in great doubt as to what his future employment should be. He did not feel himself good enough for the Church; he felt that his mind was not properly disciplined for that holy office, and that the struggle between his conscience and his impulses would have made life a torture. He also shrank from the Law, although Southey often told him that he was well fitted for the higher parts of the profession. He had studied military history with great interest, and the strategy of war; and he always fancied that he had talents for command; and he at one time thought of a military life, but then he was without connections, and he

vert, in 1795, this timely help came to Wordsworth at the turning-point of his life, and made it honest for him to write poems that will never die, instead of theatrical critiques as ephemeral as play-bills, or leaders that led only to oblivion.

In the autumn of 1795, Wordsworth and his sister took up their abode at Racedown Lodge, near Crewkerne, in Dorsetshire. Here nearly two years were passed, chiefly in the study of poetry, and Wordsworth recovered from the fierce disappointment of his political dreams, and regained that equable tenor of mind which alone is consistent with a healthy productiveness. Here Coleridge, who had contrived to see something more in the "Descriptive Sketches" than the public had discovered there, first made his acquaintance. The sympathy and appreciation of an intellect like Coleridge's supplied him with that external motive to activity which is the chief use of popularity, and justified to him his opinion of his own powers.

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felt, if he were ordered to the West Indies, his talents would not save him from the yellow-fever, and he gave that up." (Memoirs, II. 466.) It is curious to fancy Wordsworth a soldier. Certain points of likeness between him and Wellington have often struck us. They resemble each other in practical good sense, fidelity to duty, courage, and also in a kind of precise uprightness which made their personal character somewhat uninteresting. But what was decorum in Wellington was piety in Wordsworth, and the entire absence of imagination (the great point of dissimilarity) perhaps helped as much as anything to make Wellington a great commander.

It was now that the tragedy of "The Borderers" was for the most part written, and that plan of the "Lyrical Ballads" suggested which gave Wordsworth a clew to lead him out of the metaphysical labyrinth in which he was entangled. It was agreed between the two young friends, that Wordsworth was to be a philosophic poet, and, by a good fortune uncommon to such conspiracies, Nature had already consented to the arrangement. In July, 1797, the two Wordsworths removed to Allfoxden in Somersetshire, that they might be near Coleridge, who in the meanwhile had married and settled himself at Nether-Stowey. In November "The Borderers" was finished, and Wordsworth went up to London with his sister to offer it for the stage. The good Genius of the poet again interposing, the play was decisively rejected, and Wordsworth went back to Allfoxden, himself the hero of that first tragi-comedy so common to young authors.

He now applied himself to the preparation of the first volume of the "Lyrical Ballads" for the press, and it was published toward the close of 1798. The book, which contained also "The Ancient Mariner" of Coleridge, attracted little notice, and that in great part contemptuous. When Mr. Cottle, the publisher, shortly after sold his copyrights to Mr. Longman, that of "The Lyrical Ballads" was reckoned at *zero*, and it was at last given up to the authors. A few persons were not

wanting, however, who discovered the dawn-streaks of a new day in that light which the critical fire-brigade thought to extinguish with a few contemptuous spirts of cold water.

Lord Byron describes himself as waking one morning and finding himself famous, and it is quite an ordinary fact, that a blaze may be made with a little saltpetre that will be stared at by thousands who would have thought the sunrise tedious. Wordsworth might have said that he awoke and found himself infamous, for the publication of the Lyrical Ballads undoubtedly raised him to the distinction of being the most unpopular poet in England. Parnassus has two peaks; the one where improvising poets cluster; the other where the singer of deep secrets sits alone, — a peak veiled sometimes from the whole morning of a generation by earth-born mists and smoke of kitchen-fires, only to glow the more consciously at sunset, and after nightfall to crown itself with imperishable stars. Wordsworth had that self-trust which in the man of genius is sublime, and in the man of talent insufferable. With all the reviewers in a chorus of laughter behind him, he went quietly over to Germany to write more Lyrical Ballads, and to begin a poem on the growth of his own mind, at a time when there were only two men in the world (himself and Coleridge) who were aware that he had one, or at least one anywise differing from those mechanically uniform ones

which are stuck drearily, side by side, in the great pin-paper of society.

In Germany Wordsworth dined in company with Klopstock, and after dinner they had a conversation, of which Wordsworth took notes. The respectable old poet, who was passing the evening of his days by the chimney-corner, Darby and Joan like, with his respectable Muse, seems to have been rather bewildered by the apparition of a living genius. The record is of value now chiefly for the insight it gives us into Wordsworth's mind. Among other things he said "that it was the province of a great poet to raise people up to his own level, not to descend to theirs," — memorable words, the more memorable that a literary life of sixty years was in keeping with them.

After spending the winter at Goslar, Wordsworth and his sister returned to England in the spring of 1799, and settled at Grasmere in Westmoreland. In 1800, the first edition of the "Lyrical Ballads" being exhausted, it was republished with the addition of another volume, Mr. Longman paying £100 for the copyright of two editions. The book passed to a second edition in 1802, and to a third in 1805.* Wordsworth sent

* Wordsworth found (as other original minds have since done) a hearing in America sooner than in England. James Humphreys, a Philadelphia bookseller, was encouraged by s

a copy of it, with a manly letter, to Mr. Fox, particularly recommending to his attention the poems "Michael" and "The Brothers," as displaying the strength and permanence among a simple and rural population of those domestic affections which were certain to decay gradually under the influence of manufactories and poor-houses. Mr. Fox wrote a civil acknowledgment, saying that his favorites among the poems were "Harry Gill," "We are Seven," "The Mad Mother," and "The Idiot," but that he was prepossessed against the use of blank-verse for simple subjects. Any political significance in the poems he was apparently unable to see. To this second edition Wordsworth prefixed an argumentative Preface, in which he nailed to the door of the cathedral of English song the critical theses which he was to maintain against all comers in his poetry and his life. It was a new thing for an author to undertake to show the goodness of his verses by the logic and earning of his prose; but Wordsworth carried to the reform of poetry all that fervor and faith which had lost their political object, and it is another proof of the sincerity and greatness of his mind, and of that heroic simplicity which is their con-

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sufficient *list of subscribers* to reprint the first edition of the Lyrical Ballads. The second English edition, however, having been published before he had wholly completed his reprinting, was substantially followed in the first American, which was published in 1802.

comitant, that he could do so calmly what was sure to seem ludicrous to the greater number of his readers. Fifty years have since demonstrated that the true judgment of one man outweighs any counterpoise of false judgment, and that the faith of mankind is guided to a man only by his faith in himself. To this *Defensio* Wordsworth afterward added a supplement, and the two form a treatise of permanent value for philosophic statement and decorous English. Their only ill-effect has been, that they have encouraged many otherwise deserving young men to set a Sibylline value on their verses in proportion as they were unsaleable. The strength of an argument for self-reliance drawn from the example of a great man depends wholly on the greatness of him who uses it; such arguments being like armor, which may serve the strong against arrow-flights and lance-thrusts, but only suffocates the weak or sinks him the sooner in the waters of oblivion.

In 1800 the friendship of Wordsworth with Lamb began, and was thenceforward never interrupted. He continued to live at Grasmere, conscientiously diligent in the composition of poems, secure of finding the materials of glory within and around him; for his genius taught him that inspiration is no product of a foreign shore, and that no adventurer ever found it, though he wandered as long as Ulysses. Meanwhile the appreciation of the best minds and the gratitude of the purest

hearts gradually centred more and more towards him. In 1802 he made a short visit to France, in company with Miss Wordsworth, and soon after his return to England was married to Mary Hutchinson, on the 4th of October of the same year. Of the good fortune of this marriage no other proof is needed than the purity and serenity of his poems, and its record is to be sought nowhere else. Domestic happiness furnishes few materials for history; its incidents are as unmemorable as the shifting shadows of the vine and fig-leaves under which it sits, as noiseless as the smoke which rises from its hearthstone to lose itself in the kindred blue of heaven. The man of equable temperament may enjoy quiet, but the clear-aired level of happiness can only be maintained by him who, gifted with energetic passions, can by the force of character compel them to serve him, — can transfuse his intellect with them, and find in them the motive power of his daily occupations.

On the 18th of June, 1803, his first child, John, was born, and on the 14th of August of the same year he set out with his sister on a foot journey into Scotland. Coleridge was their companion during a part of this excursion, of which Miss Wordsworth kept a full diary. In Scotland he made the acquaintance of Scott, who recited to him a part of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," then in manuscript. The travellers returned to Grasmere on the 25th of September. It was during

this year that Wordsworth's intimacy with the excellent Sir George Beaumont began. Sir George was an amateur painter of considerable merit, and his friendship was undoubtedly of service to Wordsworth in making him familiar with the laws of a sister art, and thus contributing to enlarge the sympathies of his criticism, the tendency of which was toward too great exclusiveness. Sir George Beaumont, dying in 1827, did not forego his regard for the poet, but contrived to hold his affection in mortmain by the legacy of an annuity of £100, to defray the charges of a yearly journey.

In March, 1805, the poet's brother, John, lost his life by the shipwreck of the Abergavenny East-Indiaman, of which he was captain. He was a man of great purity and integrity, and sacrificed himself to his sense of duty by refusing to leave the ship till it was impossible to save him. Wordsworth was deeply attached to him, and felt such grief at his death as only solitary natures like his are capable of, though mitigated by a sense of the heroism which was the cause of it. The need of mental activity as affording an object to intense emotion may account for the great productiveness of this and the following year. He now completed "The Prelude," wrote "The Waggoner," and increased the number of his smaller poems enough to fill two volumes, which were published in 1807.

This collection, which contained some of the

most beautiful of his shorter pieces, and among others the incomparable Odes to Duty and on Immortality, did not reach a second edition till 1815. The reviewers had another laugh, and rival poets pillaged while they scoffed, particularly Byron, among whose verses a bit of Wordsworth showed as incongruously as a sacred vestment on the back of some buccaneering plunderer of an abbey There was a general combination to put him down, but on the other hand there was a powerful party in his favor, consisting of William Wordsworth. He not only continued in good heart himself, but, reversing the order usual on such occasions, kept up the spirits of his friends.*

Wordsworth passed the winter of 1806 – 7 in a house of Sir George Beaumont's, at Coleorton in Leicestershire, the cottage at Grasmere having become too small for his increased family. On his return to the Vale of Grasmere, he rented the house at Allan Bank, where he lived

* The Rev. Dr. Wordsworth has encumbered the memory of his uncle with two volumes of "Memoirs," which for confused dreariness are only matched by the Rev. Mark Noble's "History of the Protectorate House of Cromwell." It is a misfortune that his materials were not put into the hands of Professor Reed, whose notes to the American edition are among the most valuable parts of it, as they certainly are the clearest. The book contains, however, some valuable letters of Wordsworth; and those relating to this part of his life should be read by every student of his works, for the light they throw upon the principles which governed him in the composition of his poems.

three years. During this period he appears to have written very little poetry, for which his biographer assigns as a primary reason the smokiness of the Allan Bank chimneys. This will hardly account for the failure of the summer crop, especially as Wordsworth composed chiefly in the open air. It did not prevent him from writing a pamphlet upon the Convention of Cintra, which was published too late to attract much attention, though Lamb says that its effect upon him was like that which one of Milton's tracts might have had upon a contemporary. It was at Allan Bank that Coleridge dictated "The Friend," and Wordsworth contributed to it two essays, one in answer to a letter of Mathetes * (Professor Wilson), and the other on Epitaphs, republished in the Notes to "The Excursion." Here also he wrote his "Description of the Scenery of the Lakes." Perhaps a truer explanation of the comparative silence of Wordsworth's Muse during these years is to be found in the intense interest which he took in current events, whose variety, picturesqueness, and historical significance were enough to absorb all the energies of his imagination.

In the spring of 1811, Wordsworth removed to the Parsonage at Grasmere. Here he remained two years, and here he had his second intimate experience of sorrow in the loss of two of his children, Catharine and Thomas, one of whom died 4th

* The first essay in the third volume of the second edition.

June, and the other 1st December, 1812.* Early in 1813, he bought Rydal Mount, and having removed thither, changed his abode no more during the rest of his life. In March of this year he was appointed Distributor of Stamps for the county of Westmoreland, an office whose receipts rendered him independent, and whose business he was able to do by deputy, thus leaving him ample leisure for nobler duties. De Quincey speaks of this appointment as an instance of the remarkable good-luck which waited upon Wordsworth through his whole life. In our view it is only another illustration of that Scripture which describes the righteous as never forsaken. Good-luck is the willing handmaid of upright, energetic character, and conscientious observance of duty. Wordsworth owed his nomination to the friendly exertions of the Earl of Lonsdale, who desired to atone as far as might be for the injustice of the first Earl, and who respected the honesty of the man more than he appreciated the originality of the poet.† The Collectorship at Whitehaven (a

* Wordsworth's children were,—
John, born 18th June, 1803; still living, a clergyman;
Dorothy, born 16th August, 1804, died 9th July, 1847;
Thomas, born 16th June, 1806 died 1st December, 1812;
Catharine, born 6th September, 1808, died 4th June, 1812;
William, born 12th May, 1810, succeeded his father as stamp-distributor.

† Good-luck (in the sense of *Chance*) seems properly to be the occurrence of Opportunity to one who has neither deserved nor knows how to use it. In such hands it commonly

more lucrative office) was afterwards offered to Wordsworth, and declined. He had enough for independence, and wished nothing more. Still later, on the death of the Stamp-Distributor for Cumberland, a part of that district was annexed to Westmoreland, and Wordsworth's income was raised to something more than £1,000 a year.

In 1814, he made his second tour in Scotland, visiting Yarrow in company with the Ettrick Shepherd. During this year the "Excursion" was published, in an edition of five hundred copies, which supplied the demand for six years. Another edition of the same number of copies was published in 1827, and not exhausted till 1834. In 1815, "The White Doe of Rylstone" appeared, and in 1816, "A Letter to a Friend of Burns," in which Wordsworth gives his opinion upon the limits to be observed by the biographers of literary men. It contains many valuable suggestions, but allows hardly scope enough for personal details, to which he was constitutionally indifferent. Nearly the same date may be ascribed to a rhymed translation of the first three books of the Æneid, a specimen of which was printed in the Cambridge "Philological Museum." In 1819, "Peter

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turns to Ill-luck. Moore's Bermudan appointment is an instance of it. Wordsworth had a sound common-sense and practical conscientiousness, which enabled him to fill his office as well as Dr. Franklin could have done. A fitter man could not have been found in Westmoreland.

Bell," written twenty years before, was published, and, perhaps in consequence of the ridicule of the reviewers, found a more rapid sale than any of his previous volumes. "The Wagoner," printed at the same time, was less successful. His next publication was the volume of Sonnets on the River Duddon, with some miscellaneous poems, 1820. A tour on the Continent in 1820 furnished the subjects for another collection, published in 1822. This was accompanied in the same year by the volume of "Ecclesiastical Sketches." His subsequent publications were "Yarrow Revisited," 1835, and the tragedy of "The Borderers," 1842.

During all these years his fame was increasing slowly but steadily, and his age gathered to itself the reverence and the troops of friends which his poems and the nobly simple life reflected in them deserved. Public honors followed private appreciation. In 1838, the University of Dublin conferred upon him the degree of D. C. L. In 1839, Oxford did the same, and the reception of the poet (now in his seventieth year) at the University was enthusiastic. In 1842, he resigned his office of Stamp-Distributor, and Sir Robert Peel had the honor of putting him upon the civil list for a pension of £300. In 1843, he was appointed Laureate, with the express understanding that it was a tribute of respect, involving no duties except such as might be self-imposed. His only

official production was an Ode for the installation of Prince Albert as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. His life was prolonged yet seven years, almost, it might seem, that he might receive that honor which he had truly conquered for himself by the unflinching bravery of a literary life of half a century, unparalleled for the scorn with which its labors were received, and the victorious acknowledgments which at last crowned them. Surviving nearly all his contemporaries, he had, if ever any man had, a foretaste of immortality, enjoying in a sort his own posthumous renown, for the hardy slowness of its growth gave a safe pledge of its lastingness. He died on the 23d of April, 1850, the anniversary of the deaths of Shakespeare and Cervantes.

We have thus briefly sketched the life of Wordsworth, a life uneventful even for a man of letters; a life like that of an oak, of quiet self-development, throwing out stronger roots toward the side whence the prevailing storm-blasts blow, and of tougher fibre in proportion to the rocky nature of the soil in which it grows. The life and growth of his mind, and the influences which shaped it, are to be looked for, even more than is the case with most poets, in his works, for he deliberately recorded them there.

Of his personal characteristics little is related. He was somewhat above the middle height, but according to De Quincey, of indifferent figure, the

shoulders being narrow and drooping. His finest feature was the eye, which was gray and full of spiritual light. Leigh Hunt says: "I never beheld eyes that looked so inspired, so supernatural. They were like fires, half burning, half smouldering, with a sort of acrid fixture of regard. One might imagine Ezekiel or Isaiah to have had such eyes." The best likeness of him, in De Quincey's judgment, is the portrait of Milton prefixed to Richardson's notes on Paradise Lost. He was active in his habits, composing in the open air, and generally dictating his poems. His daily life was regular, simple, and frugal; his manners were dignified and kindly; and in his letters and recorded conversations it is remarkable how little that was personal entered into his judgment of contemporaries.

The true rank of Wordsworth among poets is perhaps not even yet to be fairly estimated, so hard is it to escape into the quiet hall of judgment uninflamed by the tumult of partisanship which besets the doors. Fortunately, our province here is not chiefly that of critic.

Coming to manhood, predetermined to be a great poet, at a time when the artificial school of poetry was enthroned with all the authority of long succession and undisputed legitimacy, it was almost inevitable that Wordsworth, who, both by nature and judgment was a rebel against the existing order, should become a partisan. Unfor

tunately, he became not only the partisan of a system, but of William Wordsworth as its representative. Right in general principle, he thus necessarily became wrong in particulars. Justly convinced that greatness only achieves its ends by implicitly obeying its own instincts, he perhaps reduced the following his instincts too much to a system, mistook his own resentments for the promptings of his natural genius, and, compelling principle to the measure of his own temperament, or even of the controversial exigency of the moment, fell sometimes into the error of making naturalness itself artificial. If a poet resolve to be original, it will end commonly in his being merely peculiar.

Wordsworth himself departed more and more in practice, as he grew older, from the theories which he had laid down in his prefaces: but those theories undoubtedly had a great effect in retarding the growth of his fame. He had carefully constructed a pair of spectacles through which his earlier poems were to be studied, and the public insisted on looking through them at his mature works, and were consequently unable to see fairly what required a different focus. He forced his readers to come to his poems with a certain amount of conscious preparation, and thus gave them beforehand the impression of something like mechanical artifice, and deprived them of the contented repose of im-

plicit faith. To the child a watch seems to be a living creature; but Wordsworth would not let his readers be children, and did injustice to himself by giving them an uneasy doubt whether creations which really throbbed with the very heart's-blood of genius, and were alive with nature's life of life, were not contrivances of wheels and springs. A naturalness which we are told to expect has lost the crowning grace of nature. The men who walked in Cornelius Agrippa's visionary gardens had probably no more pleasurable emotion than that of a shallow wonder, or an equally shallow self-satisfaction in thinking they had hit upon the secret of the thaumaturgy; but to an oak that has grown as God willed we come without a theory and with no botanical predilections, enjoying it simply and thankfully; or the Imagination recreates for us its past summers and winters, the birds that have nested and sung in it, the sheep that have clustered in its shade, the winds that have visited it, the cloud-bergs that have drifted over it, and the snows that have ermined it in winter. The Imagination is a faculty that flouts at foreordination, and Wordsworth seemed to do all he could to cheat his readers of her company by laying out paths with a peremptory *Do not step off the gravel!* at the opening of each, and preparing pitfalls for every conceivable emotion, with guideboards to tell each when and where it must be taught.

But if these things stood in the way of immediate appreciation, he had another theory which interferes more seriously with the total and permanent effect of his poems. He was theoretically determined not only to be a philosophic poet, but to be a *great* philosophic poet, and to this end he must produce an epic. Leaving aside the question whether the epic is obsolete or not, it may be doubted whether the history of a single man's mind is universal enough in its interest to furnish all the requirements of the epic machinery, and it may be more than doubted whether a poet's philosophy be ordinary metaphysics, divisible into chapter and section. It is rather something which is more energetic in a word than in a whole treatise, and our hearts unclose themselves instinctively at its simple *Open sesame!* while they would stand firm against the reading of the whole body of philosophy. In point of fact, the one element of greatness which "The Excursion" possesses indisputably is heaviness. It is only the episodes that are universally read, and the effect of these is diluted by the connecting and accompanying lectures on metaphysics. Wordsworth had his epic mould to fill, and, like Benvenuto Cellini in casting his Perseus, was forced to throw in everything, debasing the metal, lest it should run short. Separated from the rest, the episodes are perfect poems in their kind and without example in the language.

It cannot be denied that in Wordsworth the very highest powers of the poetic mind were associated with a certain tendency to the diffuse and commonplace. It is in the Understanding (always prosaic) that the great golden veins of his imagination are imbedded. He wrote too much to write always well; for it is not a great Xerxes-army of words, but a compact Greek ten thousand, that march safely down to posterity. He set tasks to his divine faculty, which is much the same as trying to make Jove's eagle do the service of a clucking hen. Throughout "The Prelude" and "The Excursion" he seems striving to bind the wizard Imagination with the sand-ropes of dry disquisition, and to have forgotten the potent spell-word which would make the particles cohere. There is an arenaceous quality in the style which makes progress wearisome. Yet with what splendors as of mountain-sunsets are we rewarded! what golden rounds of verse do we not see stretching heavenward with angels ascending and descending! what haunting melodies hover around us deep and eternal like the undying barytone of the sea! and if we are compelled to fare through sands and desert wildernesses, how often do we not hear airy shapes that syllable our names with a startling personal appeal to our highest consciousness and our noblest aspiration, such as we wait for in vain in any other poet!

Take from Wordsworth all which an honest

criticism cannot but allow, and what is left will show how truly great he was. He had no humor, no dramatic power, and his temperament was of that dry and juiceless quality, that in all his published correspondence you shall not find a letter, but only essays. If we consider carefully where he was most successful, we shall find that it was not so much in description of natural scenery, or delineation of character, as in vivid expression of the effect produced by external objects and events upon his own mind, and of the shape and hue (perhaps momentary) which they in turn took from his mood or temperament. His finest passages are always monologues. He had a fondness for particulars, and there are parts of his poems which remind us of local histories in the undue relative importance given to trivial matters. He was the historian of Wordsworthshire. This power of particularization (for it is as truly a power as generalization) is what gives such vigor and greatness to single lines and sentiments of Wordsworth, and to poems developing a single thought or word. It was this that made him so fond of the sonnet. His mind had not that reach and elemental movement of Milton's, which, like the trade-wind, gathered to itself thoughts and images like stately fleets from every quarter; some deep with silks and spicery, some brooding over the silent thunders of their battailous armaments, but all swept forward in their destined track, over the

long billows of his verse, every inch of canvas strained by the unifying breath of their common epic impulse. It was an organ that Milton mastered, mighty in compass, capable equally of the trumpet's ardors or the slim delicacy of the flute, and sometimes it bursts forth in great crashes through his prose, as if he touched it for solace in the intervals of his toil. If Wordsworth sometimes puts the trumpet to his lips, yet he lays it aside soon and willingly for his appropriate instrument, the pastoral reed. And it is not one that grew by any vulgar stream, but that which Apollo breathed through, tending the flocks of Admetus, — that which Pan endowed with every melody of the visible universe, — the same in which the soul of the despairing nymph took refuge and gifted with her dual nature, — so that ever and anon, amid the notes of human joy or sorrow, there comes suddenly a deeper and almost awful tone, thrilling us into dim consciousness of a forgotten divinity.

None of our great poets can be called popular in any exact sense of the word, for the highest poetry deals with thoughts and emotions which inhabit, like rarest sea-mosses, the doubtful limits of that shore between our abiding divine and our fluctuating human nature, rooted in the one, but living in the other, seldom laid bare, and otherwise visible only at exceptional moments of entire calm and clearness. Of no other poet except Shake-

speare have so many phrases become household words as of Wordsworth. If Pope has made current more epigrams of worldly wisdom, to Wordsworth belongs the nobler praise of having defined for us, and given us for a daily possession, those faint and vague suggestions of other-worldliness of whose gentle ministry with our baser nature the hurry and bustle of life scarcely ever allowed us to be conscious. He has won for himself a secure immortality by a depth of intuition which makes only the best minds at their best hours worthy, or indeed capable, of his companionship, and by a homely sincerity of human sympathy which reaches the humblest heart. Our language owes him gratitude for the purity and abstinence of his style, and we who speak it, for having emboldened us to take delight in simple things, and to trust ourselves to our own instincts. And he hath his reward. It needs not to bid

> "Renowned Spenser lie a thought more nigh
> To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie
> A little nearer Spenser";—

for there is no fear of crowding in that little society with whom he is now enrolled as fifth in the succession of the great English Poets.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.

Of the Poems in this class, "THE EVENING WALK" and "DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES" were first published in 1793. They are reprinted with some alterations that were chiefly made very soon after their publication.

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This notice, which was written some time ago, scarcely applies to the Poem, "Descriptive Sketches," as it now stands. The corrections, though numerous, are not, however, such as to prevent its retaining with propriety a place in the class of Juvenile Pieces.

1836.

I.

EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED IN ANTICIPATION OF LEAVING SCHOOL.

DEAR native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, wheresoe'er my steps may tend,
And whensoe'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,

My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, while the Sun sinks down to rest
Far in the regions of the west,
Though to the vale no parting beam
Be given, not one memorial gleam,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose.

1786.

II.

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH.

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal:
Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain:
Oh! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.

III.

AN EVENING WALK.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

General Sketch of the Lakes. — Author's Regret of his Youth which was passed amongst them. — Short Description of Noon. — Cascade. — Noontide Retreat. — Precipice and sloping Lights. — Face of Nature as the Sun declines. — Mountain Farm, and the Cock. — Slate-Quarry. — Sunset. — Superstition of the Country connected with that Moment — Swans. — Female Beggar. — Twilight Sounds. — Western Lights. — Spirits. — Night. — Moonlight. — Hope. — Night Sounds. — Conclusion.

FAR from my dearest Friend, 't is mine to rove
Through bare gray dell, high wood, and pastoral cove;
Where Derwent rests, and listens to the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore;
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedge-rows, and to emerald meads;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds;
Where, undisturbed by winds, Winander * sleeps,
'Mid clustering isles, and holly-sprinkled steeps;
Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.

* These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.

Fair scenes, erewhile, I taught, a happy child,
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild:
The spirit sought not then, in cherished sadness,
A cloudy substitute for failing gladness.
In youth's keen eye the livelong day was bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars at night,
Alike, when first the bittern's hollow bill
Was heard, or woodcocks* roamed the moonlight hill.

In thoughtless gayety I coursed the plain,
And hope itself was all I knew of pain;
For then, the inexperienced heart would beat
At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
And wild Impatience, pointing upward, showed,
Through passes yet unreached, a brighter road.
Alas! the idle tale of man is found
Depicted in the dial's moral round;
Hope with reflection blends her social rays
To gild the total tablet of his days;
Yet still, the sport of some malignant power,
He knows but from its shade the present hour.

But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain?
To show what pleasures yet to me remain,
Say, will my Friend, with unreluctant ear,
The history of a poet's evening hear?

* In the beginning of winter, these mountains are frequented by woodcocks, which in dark nights retire into the woods.

When, in the south, the wan noon, brooding still,
Breathed a pale steam around the glaring hill,
And shades of deep-embattled clouds were seen,
Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between;
When crowding cattle, checked by rails that make
A fence far stretched into the shallow lake,
Lashed the cool water with their restless tails,
Or from high points of rock looked out for fanning gales;
When schoolboys stretched their length upon the green;
And round the broad-spread oak, a glimmering scene,
In the rough fern-clad park, the herded deer
Shook the still-twinkling tail and glancing ear;
When horses in the sunburnt intake * stood,
And vainly eyed below the tempting flood,
Or tracked the passenger, in mute distress,
With forward neck the closing gate to press —
Then, while I wandered where the huddling rill
Brightens with water-breaks the hollow ghyll †
As by enchantment, an obscure retreat
Opened at once, and stayed my devious feet.
While thick above the rill the branches close,
In rocky basin its wild waves repose,
Inverted shrubs, and moss of gloomy green,

* The word *intake* is local, and signifies a mountain inclosure.

† Ghyll is also, I believe, a term confined to this country ghyll, and dingle, have the same meaning.

Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between;
And its own twilight softens the whole scene,
Save where aloft the subtle sunbeams shine
On withered briers that o'er the crags recline;
Save where, with sparkling foam, a small cascade
Illumines, from within, the leafy shade;
Beyond, along the vista of the brook,
Where antique roots its bustling course o'erlook,
The eye reposes on a secret bridge,*
Half gray, half shagged with ivy to its ridge;
There, bending o'er the stream, the listless swain
Lingers behind his disappearing wain.
— Did Sabine grace adorn my living line,
Blandusia's praise, wild stream, should yield to thine!
Never shall ruthless minister of death
'Mid thy soft glooms the glittering steel unsheath;
No goblets shall, for thee, be crowned with flowers,
No kid with piteous outcry thrill thy bowers;
The mystic shapes that by thy margin rove
A more benignant sacrifice approve, —
A mind, that, in a calm, angelic mood
Of happy wisdom, meditating good,
Beholds, of all from her high powers required,
Much done, and much designed, and more desired, —

* The reader who has made the tour of this country will recognize, in this description, the features which characterise the lower waterfall in the grounds of Rydal.

Harmonious thoughts, a soul by truth refined,
Entire affection for all human kind.

Dear Brook, farewell! To-morrow's noon again
Shall hide me, wooing long thy wild-wood strain;
But now the sun has gained his western road,
And eve's mild hour invites my steps abroad.

While, near the midway cliff, the silvered kite
In many a whistling circle wheels her flight;
Slant watery lights, from parting clouds, apace
Travel along the precipice's base;
Cheering its naked waste of scattered stone,
By lichens gray, and scanty moss, o'ergrown;
Where scarce the foxglove peeps, or thistle's beard,
And restless stone-chat, all day long, is heard.

How pleasant, as the sun declines, to view
The spacious landscape change in form and hue!
Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood;
There, objects, by the searching beams betrayed,
Come forth, and here retire in purple shade;
Even the white stems of birch, the cottage white,
Soften their glare before the mellow light;
The skiffs, at anchor where with umbrage wide
Yon chestnuts half the latticed boat-house hide,
Shed from their sides, that face the sun's slant beam,
Strong flakes of radiance on the tremulous stream;
Raised by yon travelling flock, a dusty cloud

Mounts from the road, and spreads its moving
shroud;
The shepherd, all involved in wreaths of fire,
Now shows a shadowy speck, and now is lost entire.

Into a gradual calm the breezes sink,
A blue rim borders all the lake's still brink;
There doth the twinkling aspen's foliage sleep,
And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy deep:
And now, on every side, the surface breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening streaks;
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble bright
With thousand thousand twinkling points of light
There, waves that, hardly weltering, die away,
Tip their smooth ridges with a softer ray;
And now the whole wide lake in deep repose
Is hushed, and like a burnished mirror glows,
Save where, along the shady western marge,
Coasts, with industrious oar, the charcoal barge.

Their panniered train a group of potters goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep road;
The peasant, from yon cliff of fearful edge
Shot, down the headlong path darts with his sledge;
Bright beams the lonely mountain-horse illume,
Feeding 'mid purple heath, "green rings," * and
broom;
While the sharp slope the slackened team confounds,

* "Vivid rings of green."—GREENWOOD'S *Poem on Shooting*.

Downward the ponderous timber-wain resounds;
In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
Dashed o'er the rough rock, lightly leaps along;
From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet,
Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat;
Sounds from the water-side the hammered boat;
And *blasted* quarry thunders, heard remote!

Even here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs and falling floods,
Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
Found by the grassy door of mountain farms.

Sweetly ferocious,* round his native walks,
Pride of his sister-wives, the monarch stalks;
Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread;
A crest of purple tops the warrior's head.
Bright sparks his black and rolling eyeball hurls
Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
On tiptoe reared, he strains his clarion throat,
Threatened by faintly answering farms remote:
Again with his shrill voice the mountain rings,
While, flapped with conscious pride, resound his wings!

Where, mixed with graceful birch, the sombrous pine

* "Dolcemente feroce." — Tasso. In this description of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the same animal in L'Agriculture, ou les Géorgiques Françoises, of M. Rossuet.

And yew-tree c'er the silver rocks recline,
I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
Dwarf panniered steeds, and men, and numerous
wains:
How busy all the enormous hive within,
While Echo dallies with its various din!
Some (hear you not their chisels' clinking sound?)
Toil, small as pigmies in the gulf profound;
Some, dim between the lofty cliffs descried,
O'erwalk the slender plank from side to side;
These, by the pale-blue rocks that ceaseless ring,
In airy baskets hanging, work and sing.

Just where a cloud above the mountain rears
An edge all flame, the broadening sun appears;
A long blue bar its ægis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of its golden tides;
And now that orb has touched the purple steep
Whose softened image penetrates the deep.
'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
With towers and woods, a "prospect all on fire"
While coves and secret hollows, through a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam betray.
Each slip of lawn the broken rocks between
Shines in the light with more than earthly green:
Deep yellow beams the scattered stems illume,
Far in the level forest's central gloom:
Waving his hat, the shepherd, from the vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,—
The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering rocks,

Hunts, where his master points, the intercepted
flocks.
Where oaks o'erhang the road, the radiance shoots
On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots;
The druid-stones a brightened ring unfold;
And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold;
Sunk to a curve, the day-star lessens still,
Gives one bright glance, and drops behind the hill.*

In these secluded vales, if village fame,
Confirmed by hoary hairs, belief may claim,
When up the hills, as now, retired the light,
Strange apparitions mocked the shepherd's sight

The form appears of one that spurs his steed
Midway along the hill with desperate speed;
Unhurt pursues his lengthened flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, appears a brave, a gorgeous show
Of horsemen-shadows moving to and fro;
At intervals imperial banners stream,
And now the van reflects the solar beam;
The rear through iron brown betrays a sullen gleam.
While silent stands the admiring crowd below,
Silent the visionary warriors go,
Winding in ordered pomp their upward way,†

* From Thomson.

† See a description of an appearance of this kind in Clark's Survey of the Lakes, accompanied by vouchers of its veracity, that may amuse the reader.

Till the last banner of their long array
Has disappeared, and every trace is fled
Of splendor — save the beacon's spiry head
Tipt with eve's latest gleam of burning red.

Now, while the solemn evening shadows sail,
On slowly waving pinions, down the vale;
And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
Its darkening boughs and leaves, in stronger lines
'Tis pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray,
Where, winding on along some secret bay,
The swan uplifts his chest, and backward flings
His neck, a varying arch, between his towering wings:
The eye that marks the gliding creature sees
How graceful, pride can be, and how majestic, ease.
While tender cares and mild domestic loves
With furtive watch pursue her as she moves,
The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little ones around her leads,
Nibbling the water-lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating grass.
She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgetting, calls the wearied to her side;
Alternately they mount her back, and rest
Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.

Long may they float upon this flood serene;
Theirs be these holms untrodden, still, and green
Where leafy shades fence off the blustering gale,

And breathes in peace the lily of the vale!
Yon isle, which feels not even the milkmaid's feet,
Yet hears her song, "by distance made more sweet,"
Yon isle conceals their home, their hut-like bower
Green water-rushes overspread the floor;
Long grass and willows form the woven wall,
And swings above the roof the poplar tall.
Thence issuing often with unwieldy stalk,
They crush with broad black feet their flowery walk;
Or, from the neighboring water, hear at morn
The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow horn;
Involve their serpent-necks in changeful rings,
Rolled wantonly between their slippery wings,
Or, starting up with noise and rude delight,
Force half upon the wave their cumbrous flight.

Fair Swan! by all a mother's joys caressed,
Haply some wretch has eyed, and called thee blessed;
When with her infants, from some shady seat
By the lake's edge, she rose — to face the noontide heat;
Or taught their limbs along the dusty road
A few short steps to totter with their load.

I see her now, denied to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed,
Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to the gliding moon on high.

— When low-hung clouds each star of summer
hide,
And fireless are the valleys far and wide,
Where the brook brawls along the public road
Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching broad,
Oft has she taught them on her lap to lay
The shining glow-worm; or, in heedless play,
Toss it from hand to hand, disquieted;
While others, not unseen, are free to shed
Green unmolested light upon their mossy bed.

Oh! when the sleety showers her path assail,
And like a torrent roars the headstrong gale;
No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold,
Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold;
Weak roof a cowering form two babes to shield,
And faint the fire a dying heart can yield!
ress the sad kiss, fond mother! vainly fears
Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears;
No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
Thy breast their death-bed, coffined in thine arms

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,
Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
Wetting, that drip upon the water still;
And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.

Now, with religious awe, the farewell light
Blends with the solemn coloring of night;
Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain's brow,
And round the west's proud lodge their shadows
throw,
Like Una shining on her gloomy way,
The half-seen form of Twilight roams astray;
Shedding, through paly loopholes mild and small,
Gleams that upon the lake's still bosom fall;
Soft o'er the surface creep those lustres pale,
Tracking the motions of the fitful gale.
With restless interchange, at once the bright
Wins on the shade, the shade upon the light.
No favored eye was e'er allowed to gaze
On lovelier spectacle in faery days;
When gentle Spirits urged a sportive chase,
Brushing with lucid wands the water's face;
While music, stealing round the glimmering deeps,
Charmed the tall circle of the enchanted steeps.
—The lights are vanished from the watery plains.
No wreck of all the pageantry remains.
Unheeded night has overcome the vales:
On the dark earth the wearied vision fails;
The latest lingerer of the forest train,
The lone black fir, forsakes the faded plain;
Last evening sight, the cottage smoke, no more,
Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers hoar;
And, towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain steeps appear.
—Now o'er the soothed, accordant heart we feel

A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,
And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
The soft gloom deepening on the tranquil mind.
Stay! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay!
Ah no! as fades the vale, they fade away:
Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains;
Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear retains.

The bird, who ceased, with fading light, to thread
Silent the hedge or steamy rivulet's bed,
From his gray re-appearing tower shall soon
Salute with gladsome note the rising moon,
While with a hoary light she frosts the ground,
And pours a deeper blue to Æther's bound;
Pleased, as she moves, her pomp of clouds to fold
In robes of azure, fleecy-white, and gold.

Above yon eastern hill, where darkness broods
O'er all its vanished dells, and lawns, and woods;
Where but a mass of shade the sight can trace,
Even now she shows, half veiled, her lovely face:
Across the gloomy valley flings her light,
Far to the western slopes with hamlets white;
And gives, where woods the checkered upland strew
To the green corn of summer, autumn's hue.

Thus Hope, first pouring from her blessed horn
Her dawn, far lovelier than the moon's own morn
Till higher mounted, strives in vain to cheer
The weary hills, impervious, blackening near;

Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the while
On darling spots remote her tempting smile.

Even now she decks for me a distant scene,
(For dark and broad the gulf of time between,)
Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
(Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way;
How fair its lawns and sheltering woods appear!
How sweet its streamlet murmurs in mine ear!)
Where we, my Friend, to happy days shall rise,
Till our small share of hardly paining sighs
(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hushed into the tranquil breast of death.

But now the clear bright Moon her zenith gains,
And, rimy without speck, extend the plains:
The deepest cleft the mountain's front displays
Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays;
From the dark-blue faint silvery threads divide
The hills, while gleams below the azure tide;
Time softly treads; throughout the landscape breathes
A peace enlivened, not disturbed, by wreaths
Of charcoal-smoke, that, o'er the fallen wood,
Steal down the hill, and spread along the flood.

The song of mountain streams, unheard by day
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
Air listens, like the sleeping water, still,
To catch the spiritual music of the hill,

Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferry-man from sleep,
The echoed hoof nearing the distant shore,
The boat's first motion, made with dashing oar;
Sound of closed gate, across the water borne,
Hurrying the timid hare through rustling corn;
The sportive outcry of the mocking owl;
And at long intervals the mill-dog's howl;
The distant forge's swinging thump profound;
Or yell, in the deep woods, of lonely hound.

1787–88

IV.

LINES

WRITTEN WHILE SAILING IN A BOAT AT EVENING.

How richly glows the water's breast
Before us, tinged with evening hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent course pursues!
And see how dark the backward stream,
A little moment past so smiling!
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam
Some other loiterers beguiling.

Such views the youthful Bard allure;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colors shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.

—And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow!
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to morrow?

1789.

V.

REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS,

COMPOSED UPON THE THAMES NEAR RICHMOND.

Glide gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river! come to me.
O, glide, fair stream! for ever so
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought! — Yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene!
Such as did once the Poet bless,
Who, murmuring here a later * ditty,

* Collins's Ode on the Death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his life time. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.

Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

Now let us, as we float along,
For *him* suspend the dashing oar;
And pray that never child of song
May know that Poet's sorrows more.
How calm! how still! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended!
— The evening darkness gathers round,
By virtue's holiest Powers attended.

1789.

VI.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

TAKEN

DURING A PEDESTRIAN TOUR AMONG THE ALPS

TO

THE REV. ROBERT JONES,

FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

DEAR SIR:—

However desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of our having been com

panions among the Alps seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.

In inscribing this little work to you, I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post-chaise, and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessaries upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter!

I am happy in being conscious that I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments to which you can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together; consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my coloring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the features of your native mountains, through which we have wandered together, in the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets, which give such splendor to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethgelert, Menai and her Druids, the Alpine steeps of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee, remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem

I am, dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

London, 1793.

Happiness (if she had been to be found on Earth) among the Charms of Nature. — Pleasures of the Pedestrian Traveller. — Author crosses France to the Alps. — Present State of

the Grande Chartreuse. — Lake of Como. — Time, Sunset. — Same Scene, Twilight. — Same Scene, Morning; its voluptuous Character; Old Man and Forest-cottage Music. — River Tusa. — Via Mala and Grison Gypsy. — Sckellenen-thal. — Lake of Uri. — Stormy Sunset. — Chapel of William Tell. — Force of local Emotion. — Chamois-chaser. — View of the higher Alps. — Manner of Life of a Swiss Mountaineer, interspersed with Views of the higher Alps. — Golden Age of the Alps. — Life and Views continued. — Ranz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air. — Abbey of Einsiedlen and its Pilgrims. — Valley of Chamouny. — Mont Blanc. — Slavery of Savoy. — Influence of Liberty on Cottage Happiness. — France. — Wish for the Extirpation of Slavery. — Conclusion.

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground
Where from distress a refuge might be found,
And solitude prepare the soul for heaven;
Sure, nature's God that spot to man had given
Where falls the purple morning far and wide
In flakes of light upon the mountain-side;
Where with loud voice the power of water shakes
The leafy wood, or sleeps in quiet lakes.

Yet not unrecompensed the man shall roam,
Who at the call of summer quits his home,
And plods through some wide realm o'er vale and height,
Though seeking only holiday delight;
At least, not owning to himself an aim
To which the sage would give a prouder name.
No gains too cheaply earned his fancy cloy,
Though every passing zephyr whispers joy;
Brisk toil, alternating with ready ease,

Feeds the clear current of his sympathies.
For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn;
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn!
Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the velvet green-sward to his tread:
Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye?
Upward he looks — "and calls it luxury":
Kind Nature's charities his steps attend;
In every babbling brook he finds a friend;
While chastening thoughts of sweetest use, be-
stowed
By wisdom, moralize his pensive road.
Host of his welcome inn, the noontide bower,
To his spare meal he calls the passing poor;
He views the sun uplift his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's lyre,*
Blesses the moon that comes, with kindly ray,
To light him shaken by his rugged way.
Back from his sight no bashful children steal;
He sits a brother at the cottage meal;
His humble looks no shy restraint impart;
Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
The maidens eye him with inquiring glance,
Much wondering by what fit of crazing care,
Or desperate love, bewildered, he came there.

* The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or cheerful tones as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

A hope, that prudence could not then approve
That clung to Nature with a truant's love,
O'er Gallia's wastes of corn my footsteps led;
Her files of road-elms, high above my head
In long drawn-vista, rustling in the breeze;
Or where her pathways straggle as they please
By lonely farms and secret villages.
But lo! the Alps ascending white in air,
Toy with the sun and glitter from afar.

And now, emerging from the forest's gloom,
I greet thee, Chartreuse, while I mourn thy doom,
Whither is fled that Power whose frown severe
Awed sober Reason till she crouched in fear?
That Silence, once in deathlike fetters bound,
Chains that were loosened only by the sound
Of holy rites chanted in measured round?
— The voice of blasphemy the fane alarms,
The cloister startles at the gleam of arms.
The thundering tube the aged angler hears,
Bent o'er the groaning flood that sweeps away his tears.
Cloud-piercing pine-trees nod their troubled heads,
Spires, rocks, and lawns a browner night o'erspreads;
Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
And start the astonished shades at female eyes.
From Bruno's forest screams the affrighted jay,
And slow the insulted eagle wheels away.
A viewless flight of laughing Demons mock

The Cross, by angels planted * on the aerial rock.
The "parting Genius" sighs with hollow breath
Along the mystic streams of Life and Death.†
Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
Portentous through her old woods' trackless bounds,
Vallombre,‡ 'mid her falling fanes, deplores,
For ever broke, the sabbath of her bowers.

More pleased, my foot the hidden margin roves
Of Como, bosomed deep in chestnut groves.
No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
Tower, bare or sylvan, from the narrow deeps.
— To towns, whose shades of no rude noise complain,
From ringing team apart and grating wain, —
To flat-roofed towns, that touch the water's bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
Or, from the bending rocks, obtrusive cling,
And o'er the whitened wave their shadows fling, —
The pathway leads, as round the steeps it twines;
And Silence loves its purple roof of vines.
The loitering traveller hence, at evening, sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
Or marks, 'mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maids
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades:
Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view

* Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.

† Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.

‡ Name of one of the valleys of the Chartreuse.

Stretch o'er the pictured mirror broad and blue,
And track the yellow lights from steep to steep,
As up the opposing hills they slowly creep.
Aloft, here, half a village shines, arrayed
In golden light; half hides itself in shade:
While, from amid the darkened roofs, the spire,
Restlessly flashing, seems to mount like fire:
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the lake below.
Slow glides the sail along the illumined shore,
And steals into the shade the lazy oar;
Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
And amorous music on the water dies.

How blest, delicious scene! the eye that greets
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;
Beholds the unwearied sweep of wood that scales
Thy cliffs; the endless waters of thy vales;
Thy lowly cots that sprinkle all the shore,
Each with its household boat beside the door;
Thy torrent shooting from the clear-blue sky;
Thy towns, that cleave, like swallows' nests, on high;
That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descried
Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
Whence lutes and voices down the enchanted woods
Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods;
Thy lake, that, streaked or dappled, blue or gray
Mid smoking woods gleams hid from morning's ray
Slow-travelling down the western hills, to enfold
Its green-tinged margin in a blaze of gold;

Thy glittering steeples, whence the matin bell
Calls forth the woodman from his desert cell,
And quickens the blithe sound of oars that pass
Along the steaming lake, to early mass.
But now farewell to each and all, — adieu
To every charm, and last and chief to you,
Ye lovely maidens that in noontide shade
Rest near your little plots of wheaten glade;
To all that binds the soul in powerless trance,
Lip-dewing song, and ringlet-tossing dance;
Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illume
The sylvan cabin's lute-enlivened gloom.
— Alas! the very murmur of the streams
Breathes o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams,
While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
Her shameless timbrel shakes on Como's marge,
And lures from bay to bay the vocal barge.

Yet are thy softer arts with power indued
To soothe and cheer the poor man's solitude.
By silent cottage-doors, the peasant's home
Left vacant for the day, I loved to roam.
But once I pierced the mazes of a wood
In which a cabin undeserted stood;
There an old man an olden measure scanned
On a rude viol touched with withered hand.
As lambs or fawns in April clustering lie
Under a hoary oak's thin canopy,
Stretched at his feet, with steadfast upward eye,

His children's children listened to the sound;
— A Hermit with his family around!

But let us hence; for fair Locarno smiles
Embowered in walnut slopes and citron isles:
Or seek at eve the banks of Tusa's stream,
Where, 'mid dim towers and woods, her * waters gleam.
From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire
The dull-red steeps, and, darkening still, aspire
To where afar rich orange lustres glow
Round undistinguished clouds, and rocks, and snow
Or, led where Via Mala's chasms confine
The indignant waters of the infant Rhine,
Hang o'er the abyss, whose else impervious gloom
His burning eyes with fearful light illume.

The mind condemned, without reprieve, to go
O'er life's long deserts with its charge of woe,
With sad congratulation joins the train
Where beasts and men together o'er the plain
Move on, — a mighty caravan of pain:
Hope, strength, and courage, social suffering brings,
Freshening the wilderness with shades and springs
— There be whose lot far otherwise is cast:
Sole human tenant of the piny waste,
By choice or doom a gypsy wanders here,

* The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the Alps by the Simplon Pass.

A nursling babe her only comforter;
Lo, where she sits beneath yon shaggy rock,
A cowering shape half hid in curling smoke!

When lightning among clouds and mountain-snows
Predominates, and darkness comes and goes,
And the fierce torrent, at the flashes broad,
Starts, like a horse, beside the glaring road, —
She seeks a covert from the battering shower
In the roofed bridge; * the bridge, in that dread hour,
Itself all trembling at the torrent's power.

Nor is she more at ease on some *still* night,
When not a star supplies the comfort of its light;
Only the waning moon hangs dull and red
Above a melancholy mountain's head,
Then sets. In total gloom the Vagrant sighs,
Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes;
Or on her fingers counts the distant clock,
Or, to the drowsy crow of midnight cock,
Listens, or quakes while from the forest's gulf
Howls near and nearer yet the famished wolf.

From the green vale of Urseren smooth and wide
Descend we now, the maddened Reuss our guide;

* Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood, and covered: these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.

By rocks that, shutting out the blessed day,
Cling tremblingly to rocks as loose as they;
By cells,* upon whose image, while he prays,
The kneeling peasant scarcely dares to gaze;
By many a votive death-cross † planted near,
And watered duly with the pious tear,
That faded silent from the upward eye,
Unmoved with each rude form of peril nigh;
Fixed on the anchor left by Him who saves
Alike in whelming snows, and roaring waves.

But soon a peopled region on the sight
Opens, — a little world of calm delight;
Where mists, suspended on the expiring gale,
Spread rooflike o'er the deep secluded vale,
And beams of evening, slipping in between,
Gently illuminate a sober scene: —
Here, on the brown wood-cottages ‡ they sleep,
There, over rock or sloping pasture creep.
On as we journey, in clear view displayed,
The still vale lengthens underneath its shade
Of low-hung vapor: on the freshened mead
The green light sparkles; — the dim bowers recede

* The Catholic religion prevails here: these cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted like the Roman tombs, along the road-side.

† Crosses, commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow, and other accidents, are very common along this dreadful road.

‡ The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood

While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape lull,
And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,
In solemn shapes before the admiring eye
Dilated hang its misty pines on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and towers,
And antique castles seen through gleamy showers

From such romantic dreams, my soul, awake!
To sterner pleasure, where, by Uri's lake
In Nature's pristine majesty outspread,
Winds neither road nor path for foot to tread:
The rocks rise naked as a wall, or stretch,
Far o'er the water, hung with groves of beech;
Aerial pines from loftier steeps ascend,
Nor stop but where creation seems to end.
Yet here and there, if 'mid the savage scene
Appears a scanty plot of smiling green,
Up from the lake a zigzag path will creep,
To reach a small wood-hut hung boldly on the steep.
— Before those thresholds, (never can they know
The face of traveller passing to and fro,)
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
For whom at morning tolled the funeral bell;
Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark foregoes,
Touched by the beggar's moan of human woes;
The shady porch ne'er offered a cool seat
To pilgrims overcome by summer's heat.
Yet thither the world's business finds its way

At times, and tales unsought beguile the day,
And *there* are those fond thoughts which Solitude,
However stern, is powerless to exclude.
There doth the maiden watch her lover's sail
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale;
At midnight listens till his parting oar,
And its last echo, can be heard no more.

And what if osprevs, cormorants, herons, cry,
Amid tempestuous vapors driving by,
Or hovering over wastes too bleak to rear
That common growth of earth, the foodful ear;
Where the green apple shrivels on the spray,
And pines the unripened pear in summer's kindliest ray;
Contentment shares the desolate domain
With Independence, child of high Disdain.
Exulting 'mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
And grasps by fits her sword, and often eyes;
And sometimes, as from rock to rock she bounds,
The Patriot nymph starts at imagined sounds,
And, wildly pausing, oft she hangs aghast,
Whether some old Swiss air hath checked her haste
Or thrill of Spartan fife is caught between the blast.

Swoln with incessant rains from hour to hour,
All day the floods a deepening murmur pour:
The sky is veiled, and every cheerful sight:

Dark is the region as with coming night;
But what a sudden burst of overpowering light!
Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the wheeling eagle's glorious form!
Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
The wood-crowned cliffs that o'er the lake recline;
Those lofty cliffs a hundred streams unfold,
At once to pillars turned that flame with gold:
Behind his sail the peasant shrinks, to shun
The *west*, that burns like one dilated sun,
A crucible of mighty compass, felt
By mountains, glowing till they seem to melt.

But, lo! the boatman, overawed, before
The pictured fane of Tell suspends his oar;
Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
While his eyes sparkle with heroic tears.
And who, that walks where men of ancient days
Have wrought with godlike arm the deeds of praise,
Feels not the spirit of the place control,
Or rouse and agitate his laboring soul?
Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lulled by Alpine rills,
On Zutphen's plain; or on that highland dell,
Through which rough Garry cleaves his way, can tell
What high resolves exalt the tenderest thought
Of him whom passion rivets to the spot,
Where breathed the gale that caught Wolfe's happiest sigh,

And the last sunbeam fell on Bayard's eye;
Where bleeding Sidney from the cup retired,
And glad Dundee in "faint huzzas" expired!

But now with other mind I stand alone
Upon the summit of this naked cone,
And watch the fearless chamois-hunter chase
His prey, through tracts abrupt of desolate space,
* Through vacant worlds where Nature never gave
A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,
Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred keep;
Through worlds where Life, and Voice, and Motion sleep;
Where silent Hours their death-like sway extend,
Save when the avalanche breaks loose, to rend
Its way with uproar, till the ruin, drowned
In some dense wood or gulf of snow profound,
Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive sound.
— 'T is his, while wandering on from height to height,
To see a planet's pomp and steady light
In the least star of scarce-appearing night;
While the pale moon moves near him, on the bound
Of ether, shining with diminished round.
And far and wide the icy summits blaze,
Rejoicing in the glory of her rays:

* For most of the images in the next sixteen verses, I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observations annexed to his translation of Coxe's Tour in Switzerland.

To him the day-star glitters small and bright,
Shorn of its beams, insufferably white,
And he can look beyond the sun, and view
Those fast-receding depths of sable blue
Flying till vision can no more pursue!
— At once bewildering mists around him close,
And cold and hunger are his least of woes;
The Demon of the snow, with angry roar
Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
Soon with despair's whole weight his spirits sink;
Bread has he none, the snow must be his drink;
And, ere his eyes can close upon the day,
The eagle of the Alps o'ershades her prey.

Now couch thyself where, heard with fear afar,
Thunders through echoing pines the headlong Aar;
Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
Of pensive Underwalden's * pastoral heights.
— Is there who 'mid these awful wilds has seen
The native Genii walk the mountain green?
Or heard, while other worlds their charms reveal,
Soft music o'er the aerial summit steal?
While o'er the desert, answering every close,
Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and goes.
— And sure there is a secret Power that reigns

* The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded

Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,
Nought but the *chalets*,* flat and bare, on high
Suspended 'mid the quiet of the sky;
Or distant herds that pasturing upward creep,
And, not untended, climb the dangerous steep.
How still! no irreligious sound or sight
Rouses the soul from her severe delight.
An idle voice the sabbath region fills
Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
And with that voice accords the soothing sound
Of drowsy bells, for ever tinkling round;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-wood's steady *sugh* †
The solitary heifer's deepened low;
Or rumbling, heard remote, of falling snow.
All motions, sounds, and voices, far and nigh,
Blend in a music of tranquillity;
Save when, a stranger seen below, the boy
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.

When, from the sunny breast of open seas,
And bays with myrtle fringed, the southern breeze
Comes on to gladden April with the sight
Of green isles widening on each snow-clad height
When shouts and lowing herds the valley fill,
And louder torrents stun the noon-tide hill,

* This picture is from the middle region of the Alps. *Chalets* are summer huts for the Swiss herdsmen.

† Sugh, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

The pastoral Swiss begin the cliffs to scale,
Leaving to silence the deserted vale;
And like the Patriarchs in their simple age
Move, as the verdure leads, from stage to stage;
High and more high in summer's heat they go,
And hear the rattling thunder far below;
Or steal beneath the mountains, half deterred,
Where huge rocks tremble to the bellowing herd.

One I behold who, 'cross the foaming flood,
Leaps with a bound of graceful hardihood;
Another high on that green ledge; — he gained
The tempting spot with every sinew strained;
And downward thence a knot of grass he throws,
Food for his beasts in time of winter snows.
— Far different life from what Tradition hoar
Transmits of happier lot in times of yore!
Then Summer lingered long; and honey flowed
From out the rocks, the wild bees' safe abode:
Continual waters welling cheered the waste,
And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste:
Nor Winter yet his frozen stores had piled,
Usurping where the fairest herbage smiled:
Nor Hunger driven the herds from pastures bare,
To climb the treacherous cliffs for scanty fare.
Then the milk-thistle flourished through the land,
And forced the full-swoln udder to demand,
Thrice every day, the pail and welcome hand.
Thus does the father to his children tell
Of banished bliss, by fancy loved too well.

Alas! that human guilt provoked the rod
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.

'Tis morn: with gold the verdant mountain glows
More high, the snowy peaks with hues of rose.
Far-stretched beneath the many-tinted hills,
A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
A solemn sea! whose billows wide around
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound:
Pines, on the coast, through mists their tops uprear
That like to leaning masts of stranded ships appear
A single chasm, a gulf of gloomy blue,
Gapes in the centre of the sea; and, through
That dark, mysterious gulf ascending, sound
Innumerable streams with roar profound.
Mount through the nearer vapors notes of birds,
And merry flageolet; the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the heifer's tinkling bell,
Talk, laughter, and perchance a church-tower knell
Think not, the peasant from aloft has gazed
And heard with heart unmoved, with soul unraised
Nor is his spirit less enrapt, nor less
Alive to independent happiness,
Then, when he lies, outstretched, at eventide,
Upon the fragrant mountain's purple side:
For as the pleasures of his simple day
Beyond his native valley seldom stray,
Nought round its darling precincts can he find

But brings some past enjoyment to his mind;
While Hope, reclining upon Pleasure's urn,
Binds her wild wreaths, and whispers his return.

Once, Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was blest as free, — for he was Nature's child.
He, all superior but his God disdained,
Walked none restraining, and by none restrained:
Confessed no law but what his reason taught,
Did all he wished, and wished but what he ought.
As man in his primeval dower arrayed
The image of his glorious Sire displayed,
Even so, by faithful Nature guarded, here
The traces of primeval man appear;
The simple dignity no forms debase;
The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace:
The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
His book he prizes, nor neglects his sword;
— Well taught by that to feel his rights, prepared
With this "the blessings he enjoys to guard."

And, as his native hills encircle ground
For many a marvellous victory renowned,
The work of Freedom daring to oppose,
With few in arms,* innumerable foes,

* Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors, the house of Austria; and, in particular, to one fought at Næffals near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty men are said to have defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians.

When to those famous fields his steps are led,
An unknown power connects him with the dead
For images of other worlds are there,
Awful the light, and holy is the air.
Fitfully, and in flashes, through his soul,
Like sun-lit tempests, troubled transports roll,
His bosom heaves, his spirit towers amain,
Beyond the senses and their little reign.

And oft, when that dread vision hath past by
He holds with God himself communion high,
There where the peal of swelling torrents fills
The sky-roofed temple of the eternal hills
Or, when upon the mountain's silent brow
Reclined, he sees, above him and below,
Bright stars of ice and azure fields of snow,
While needle peaks of granite shooting bare
Tremble in ever-varying tints of air.
And when a gathering weight of shadows brown
Falls on the valleys as the sun goes down ;
And Pikes, of darkness named and fear and
storms,*
Uplift in quiet their illumined forms,
In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
Tinged like an angel's smile all rosy red, —

Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription, 1388, the year the battle was fought, marking out, as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians, attempting to make a stand, were repulsed anew

* As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror ; Wetter-Horn, the pike of storms, &c. &c.,

Awe in his breast with holiest love unites.
And the near heavens impart their own delights.

When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle grows;
That hut which on the hill so oft employs
His thoughts, the central point of all his joys.
And as a swallow, at the hour of rest,
Peeps often ere she darts into her nest,
So to the homestead, where the grandsire tends
A little prattling child, he oft descends,
To glance a look upon the well-matched pair;
Till storm and driving ice blockade him there.
There, safely guarded by the woods behind,
He hears the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears Winter calling all his terrors round,
And, blest within himself, he shrinks not from the sound.

Through Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide.
Unstained by envy, discontent, and pride;
The bound of all his vanity, to deck,
With one bright bell, a favorite heifer's neck;
Well pleased upon some simple annual feast,
Remembered half the year and hoped the rest,
If dairy-produce, from his inner hoard,
Of thrice ten summers dignify the board.
— Alas! in every clime a flying ray
Is all we have to cheer our wintry way;
And here the unwilling mind may more than trace

The general sorrows of the human race:
The churlish gales of penury, that blow
Cold as the north-wind o'er a waste of snow,
To them the gentle groups of bliss deny
That on the noonday bank of leisure lie.
Yet more;—compelled by Powers which only deign
That *solitary* man disturb their reign,
Powers that support an unremitting strife
With all the tender charities of life,
Full oft the father, when his sons have grown
To manhood, seems their title to disown;
And from his nest amid the storms of heaven
Drives, eagle-like, those sons as he was driven;
With stern composure watches to the plain—
And never, eagle-like, beholds again!

When long familiar joys are all resigned,
Why does their sad remembrance haunt the mind?
Lo! where through flat Batavia's willowy groves,
Or by the lazy Seine, the exile roves;
O'er the curled waters Alpine measures swell,
And search the affections to their inmost cell;
Sweet poison spreads along the listener's veins,
Turning past pleasures into mortal pains;
Poison, which not a frame of steel can brave,
Bows his young head with sorrow to the grave.*

* The well known effect of the famous air, called in French Ranz des Vaches, upon the Swiss troops.

Gay lark of hope, thy silent song resume!
Ye flattering eastern lights, once more the hills illume!
Fresh gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart, return!
Alas! the little joy to man allowed,
Fades like the lustre of an evening cloud;
Or like the beauty in a flower installed,
Whose season was, and cannot be recalled.
Yet, when opprest by sickness, grief, or care,
And taught that pain is pleasure's natural heir,
We still confide in more than we can know;
Death would be else the favorite friend of woe.

'Mid savage rocks, and seas of snow that shine
Between interminable tracts of pine,
Within a temple stands an awful shrine,
By an uncertain light revealed, that falls
On the mute Image and the troubled walls.
Oh! give not me that eye of hard disdain
That views, undimmed, Ensiedlen's* wretched fane.
While ghastly faces through the gloom appear,
Abortive joy, and hope that works in fear;
While prayer contends with silenced agony,
Surely in other thoughts contempt may die.
If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
One flower of hope — oh, pass and leave it there.

* This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholic world, laboring under mental or bodily afflictions.

The tall sun, pausing on an Alpine spire,
Flings o'er the wilderness a stream of fire:
Now meet we other pilgrims ere the day
Close on the remnant of their weary way;
While they are drawing toward the sacred floor
Where, so they fondly think, the worm shall gnaw
no more.
How gayly murmur and how sweetly taste
The fountains * reared for them amid the waste
Their thirst they slake · — they wash their toil-
worn feet,
And some with tears of joy each other greet.
Yes, I must see you when ye first behold
Those holy turrets tipped with evening gold,
In that glad moment will for you a sigh
Be heaved, of charitable sympathy;
In that glad moment when your hands are prest
In mute devotion on the thankful breast!

Last, let us turn to Chamouny, that shields
With rocks and gloomy woods her fertile fields:
Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
And with wild flowers and blooming orchards
blend; —
A scene more fair than what the Grecian feigns
Of purple lights and ever-vernal plains;
Here all the seasons revel hand in hand:

* Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain

Mid lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fanned,
They sport beneath that mountain's matchless height
That holds no commerce with the summer night.
From age to age, throughout his lonely bounds
The crash of ruin fitfully resounds;
Appalling havoc! but serene his brow,
Where daylight lingers on perpetual snow;
Glitter the stars above, and all is black below.

What marvel then if many a Wanderer sigh,
While roars the sullen Arve in anger by,
That not for thy reward, unrivall'd Vale!
Waves the ripe harvest in the autumnal gale;
That thou, the slave of slaves, art doomed to pine
And droop, while no Italian arts are thine,
To soothe or cheer, to soften or refine.

Hail Freedom! whether it was mine to stray,
With shrill winds whistling round my lonely way
On the bleak sides of Cumbria's heath-clad moors,
Or where dank sea-weed lashes Scotland's shores;
To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breathing rose,
And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows;
Still have I found, where Tyranny prevails,
That virtue languishes and pleasure fails,
While the remotest hamlets blessings share
In thy loved presence known, and only there;
Heart-blessings,—outward treasures too which the eye

Of the sun peeping through the clouds can spy,
And every passing breeze will testify.
There, to the porch, belike with jasmine bound
Or woodbine wreaths, a smoother path is wound
The housewife there a brighter garden sees,
Where hum on busier wing her happy bees;
On infant cheeks there fresher roses blow;
And gray-haired men look up with livelier brow,
To greet the traveller needing food and rest;
Housed for the night, or but a half-hour's guest.

And oh, fair France! though now the traveller sees
Thy three-striped banner fluctuate on the breeze
Though martial songs have banished songs of love
And nightingales desert the village grove,
Scared by the fife and rumbling drum's alarms,
And the short thunder, and the flash of arms,
That cease not till night falls, when far and nigh,
Sole sound, the Sourd* prolongs his mournful cry
— Yet, hast thou found that Freedom spreads her power
Beyond the cottage-hearth, the cottage-door:
All nature smiles, and owns beneath her eyes
Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
Yes, as I roamed where Loiret's waters glide
Through rustling aspens heard from side to side,

* An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry heard at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of the Loire.

When from October clouds a milder light
Fell where the blue flood rippled into white;
Methought from every cot the watchful bird
Crowed with ear-piercing power till then unheard;
Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring streams,
Rocked the charmed thought in more delightful dreams;
Chasing those pleasant dreams, the falling leaf
Awoke a fainter sense of moral grief;
The measured echo of the distant flail
Wound in more welcome cadence down the vale;
With more majestic course * the water rolled,
And ripening foliage shone with richer gold.
— But foes are gathering, — Liberty must raise
Red on the hills her beacon's far-seen blaze;
Must bid the tocsin ring from tower to tower! —
Nearer and nearer comes the trying hour!
Rejoice, brave Land, though pride's perverted ire
Rouse hell's own aid, and wrap thy fields in fire:
Lo, from the flames a great and glorious birth;
As if a new-made heaven were hailing a new earth!
— All cannot be: the promise is too fair
For creatures doomed to breathe terrestrial air:
Yet not for this will sober reason frown
Upon that promise, nor the hope disown;

* The duties upon many parts of the French rivers were so exorbitant, that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water carriage, were obliged to transport their goods by land.

She knows that only from high aims ensue
Rich guerdons, and to them alone are due.

Great God! by whom the strifes of men are weighed
In an impartial balance, give thine aid
To the just cause; and, oh! do thou preside
Over the mighty stream now spreading wide:
So shall its waters, from the heavens supplied
In copious showers, from earth by wholesome springs,
Brood o'er the long-parched lands with Nile-like wings!
And grant that every sceptred child of clay,
Who cries presumptuous, "Here the flood shall stay,"
May in its progress see thy guiding hand,
And cease the acknowledged purpose to withstand:
Or, swept in anger from the insulted shore,
Sink with his servile bands, to rise no more!

To-night, my Friend, within this humble cot
Be scorn and fear and hope alike forgot
In timely sleep; and when, at break of day,
On the tall peaks the glistening sunbeams play,
With a light heart our course we may renew,
The first whose footsteps print the mountain dew

1791, 1792.

VII.

LINES

LEFT UPON A SEAT IN A YEW-TREE, WHICH STANDS NEAR THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE, ON A DESOLATE PART OF THE SHORE, COMMANDING A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT.

Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely Yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb?
What if the bee love not these barren boughs?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.
——————————Who he was
That piled these stones and with the mossy sod
First covered, and here taught this aged Tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember. — He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth by science nursed,
And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favored Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow; 'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn, — against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,

And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude. — Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper:
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene, — how lovely 't is
Thou seest, — and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, that his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous! Nor, that time
When Nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those Beings to whose minds
Warm from the labors of benevolence
The world, and human life, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh,
Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
What he must never feel: and so, lost Man!
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died, — this seat his only monument.

If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know that
pride,

Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

1795.

VIII.

GUILT AND SORROW;

OR,

INCIDENTS UPON SALISBURY PLAIN.

ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS POEM, PUBLISHED IN 1842.

Not less than one third of the following poem, though it has from time to time been altered in the expression, was published so far back as the year 1798, under the title of "The Female Vagrant." The extract is of such length that an apology seems

to be required for reprinting it here: but it was necessary to restore it to its original position, or the rest would have been unintelligible. The whole was written before the close of the year 1794, and I will detail, rather as matter of literary biography than for any other reason, the circumstances under which it was produced.

During the latter part of the summer of 1793, having passed a month in the Isle of Wight, in view of the fleet which was then preparing for sea off Portsmouth at the commencement of the war, I left the place with melancholy forebodings. The American war was still fresh in memory. The struggle which was beginning, and which many thought would be brought to a speedy close by the irresistible arms of Great Britain being added to those of the allies, I was assured in my own mind would be of long continuance, and productive of distress and misery beyond all possible calculation. This conviction was pressed upon me by having been a witness, during a long residence in revolutionary France, of the spirit which prevailed in that country. After leaving the Isle of Wight, I spent two days in wandering on foot over Salisbury Plain, which, though cultivation was then widely spread through parts of it, had upon the whole a still more impressive appearance than it now retains.

The monuments and traces of antiquity, scattered in abundance over that region, led me unavoidably to compare what we know or guess of those remote times with certain aspects of modern society, and with calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject. In those reflections, joined with particular facts that had come to my knowledge, the following stanzas originated.

In conclusion, to obviate some distraction in the minds of those who are well acquainted with Salisbury Plain, it may be proper to say, that, of the features described as belonging to it one or two are taken from other desolate parts of England.

I.

A TRAVELLER on the skirt of Sarum's Plain
Pursued his vagrant way, with feet half bare;
Stooping his gait, but not as if to gain
Help from the staff he bore; for mien and air
Were hardy, though his cheek seemed worn with care
Both of the time to come, and time long fled:
Down fell in straggling locks his thin gray hair;
A coat he wore of military red,
But faded, and stuck o'er with many a patch and shred.

II.

While thus he journeyed, step by step led on,
He saw and passed a stately inn, full sure
That welcome in such house for him was none.
No board inscribed the needy to allure
Hung there, no bush proclaimed to old and poor
And desolate, "Here you will find a friend!"
The pendent grapes glittered above the door; —
On he must pace, perchance till night descend,
Where'er the dreary roads their bare white lines extend.

III.

The gathering clouds grew red with stormy fire,
In streaks diverging wide and mounting high;
That inn he long had passed; the distant spire,
Which oft as he looked back had fixed his eye,
Was lost, though still he looked, in the blank sky
Perplexed and comfortless he gazed around,

And scarce could any trace of man descry,
Save cornfields stretched and stretching without
bound ;
But where the sower dwelt was nowhere to be found.

IV.

No tree was there, no meadow's pleasant green,
No brook to wet his lip or soothe his ear ;
Long files of corn-stacks here and there were seen,
But not one dwelling-place his heart to cheer.
Some laborer, thought he, may perchance be near;
And so he sent a feeble shout — in vain ;
No voice made answer, he could only hear
Winds rustling over plots of unripe grain,
Or whistling thro' thin grass along the unfurrowed
plain.

V.

Long had he fancied each successive slope
Concealed some cottage, whither he might turn
And rest ; but now along heaven's darkening cope
The crows rushed by in eddies, homeward borne.
Thus warned he sought some shepherd's spreading
thorn
Or hovel from the storm to shield his head,
But sought in vain ; for now, all wild, forlorn,
And vacant, a huge waste around him spread ;
The wet, cold ground, he feared, must be his only
bed.

VI.

And be it so, — for to the chill night shower
And the sharp wind his head he oft hath bared

A Sailor he, who many a wretched hour
Hath told; for, landing after labor hard,
Full long endured in hope of just reward,
He to an armèd fleet was forced away
By seamen, who perhaps themselves had shared
Like fate; was hurried off, a helpless prey,
'Gainst all that in *his* heart, or theirs perhaps, said nay.

VII.

For years the work of carnage did not cease,
And death's dire aspect daily he surveyed,
Death's minister; then came his glad release,
And hope returned, and Pleasure fondly made
Her dwelling in his dreams. By Fancy's aid
The happy husband flies, his arms to throw
Round his wife's neck; the prize of victory laid
In her full lap, he sees such sweet tears flow
As if thenceforth nor pain nor trouble she could know.

VIII.

Vain hope! for fraud took all that he had earned.
The lion roars and gluts his tawny brood
Even in the desert's heart; but he, returned,
Bears not those he loves their needful food.
His home approaching, but in such a mood
That from his sight his children might have run,
He met a traveller, robbed him, shed his blood;
And when the miserable work was done
He fled, a vagrant since, the murderer's fate to shun.

IX.

From that day forth no place to him could be
So lonely, but that thence might come a pang
Brought from without to inward misery.
Now, as he plodded on, with sullen clang
A sound of chains along the desert rang;
He looked, and saw upon a gibbet high
A human body that in irons swang,
Uplifted by the tempest whirling by;
And, hovering, round it often did a raven fly.

X.

It was a spectacle which none might view,
In spot so savage, but with shuddering pain;
Nor only did for him at once renew
All he had feared from man, but roused a train
Of the mind's phantoms, horrible as vain.
The stones, as if to cover him from day,
Rolled at his back along the living plain;
He fell, and without sense or motion lay;
But, when the trance was gone, feebly pursued
his way.

XI.

As one whose brain habitual frenzy fires
Owes to the fit in which his soul hath tossed
Profounder quiet, when the fit retires,
Even so the dire phantasma which had crossed
His sense, in sudden vacancy quite lost,
Left his mind still as a deep evening stream.
Nor, if accosted now, in thought engrossed,
Moody, or inly troubled, would he seem
To traveller who might talk of any casual theme.

XII.

Hurtle the clouds in deeper darkness piled,
Gone is the raven timely rest to seek;
He seemed the only creature in the wild
On whom the elements their rage might wreak;
Save that the bustard, of those regions bleak
Shy tenant, seeing by the uncertain light
A man there wandering, gave a mournful shriek,
And half upon the ground, with strange affright,
Forced hard against the wind a thick unwieldy
flight.

XIII.

All, all was cheerless to the horizon's bound,
The weary eye — which, wheresoe'er it strays,
Marks nothing but the red sun's setting round,
Or on the earth strange lines, in former days
Left by gigantic arms — at length surveys
What seems an antique castle spreading wide;
Hoary and naked are its walls, and raise
Their brow sublime: in shelter there to bide
He turned, while rain poured down smoking on
every side.

XIV.

Pile of Stonehenge! so proud to hint yet keep
Thy secrets, thou that lov'st to stand and hear
The Plain resounding to the whirlwind's sweep,
Inmate of lonesome Nature's endless year;
Even if thou saw'st the giant wicker rear
For sacrifice its throngs of living men,
Before thy face did never wretch appear,

Who in his heart had groaned with deadlier pain
Than he who, tempest-driven, thy shelter now
would gain.

XV.

Within that fabric of mysterious form,
Winds met in conflict, each by turns supreme;
And, from the perilous ground dislodged, through
storm
And rain he wildered on, no moon to stream
From gulf of parting clouds one friendly beam,
Nor any friendly sound his footsteps led;
Once did the lightning's faint, disastrous gleam
Disclose a naked guide-post's double head,
Sight which though lost at once a gleam of pleas-
ure shed.

XVI.

No swinging sign-board creaked from cottage elm
To stay his steps with faintness overcome;
'T was dark and void as ocean's watery realm,
Roaring with storms beneath night's starless gloom,
No Gypsy cower'd o'er fire of furze or broom;
No laborer watched his red kiln glaring bright,
Nor taper glimmered dim from sick man's room.
Along the waste no line of mournful light
From lamp of lonely toll-gate streamed athwart
the night.

XVII.

At length, though hid in clouds, the moon arose;
The downs were visible — and now revealed
A structure stands, which two bare slopes inclose

It was a spot, where, ancient vows fulfilled,
Kind, pious hands did to the Virgin build
A lonely Spital, the belated swain
From the night terrors of that waste to shield:
But there no human being could remain,
And now the walls are named the "Dead House"
of the plain.

XVIII.

Though he had little cause to love the abode
Of man, or covet sight of mortal face,
Yet when faint beams of light that ruin showed,
How glad he was at length to find some trace
Of human shelter in that dreary place.
Till to his flock the early shepherd goes,
Here shall much-needed sleep his frame embrace.
In a dry nook where fern the floor bestrows
He lays his stiffened limbs, — his eyes begin to
close;

XIX.

When, hearing a deep sigh, that seemed to come
From one who mourned in sleep, he raised his
head,
And saw a woman in the naked room
Outstretched, and turning on a restless bed:
The moon a wan dead light around her shed.
He waked her, — spake in tone that would not fail,
He hoped, to calm her mind; but ill he sped,
For of that ruin she had heard a tale
Which now with freezing thoughts did all her
powers assail;

XX.

Had heard of one who, forced from storms to shroud
Felt the loose walls of this decayed Retreat
Rock to incessant neighings shrill and loud,
While his horse pawed the floor with furious heat
Till on a stone, that sparkled to his feet,
Struck, and still struck again, the troubled horse:
The man half raised the stone with pain and sweat,
Half raised, for well his arm might lose its force,
Disclosing the grim head of a late murdered corse.

XXI.

Such tale of this lone mansion she had learned,
And when that shape, with eyes in sleep half drowned,
By the moon's sullen lamp she first discerned,
Cold stony horror all her senses bound.
Her he addressed in words of cheering sound;
Recovering heart, like answer did she make;
And well it was that, of the corse there found,
In converse that ensued she nothing spake;
She knew not what dire pangs in him such tale could wake.

XXII.

But soon his voice and words of kind intent
Banished that dismal thought; and now the wind
In fainter howlings told its *rage* was spent.
Meanwhile discourse ensued of various kind,
Which by degrees a confidence of mind
And mutual interest failed not to create.
And, to a natural sympathy resigned,

In that forsaken building where they sate
The Woman thus retraced her own untoward fate.

XXIII.

"By Derwent's side my father dwelt, — a man
Of virtuous life, by pious parents bred;
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said:
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read;
For books in every neighboring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

XXIV

A little croft we owned, — a plot of corn,
A garden stored with peas, and mint, and thyme,
And flowers for posies, oft on Sunday morn
Plucked while the church bells rang their earliest chime.
Can I forget our freaks at shearing-time!
My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied;
The cowslip-gathering in June's dewy prime;
The swans that with white chests upreared in pride
Rushing and racing came to meet me at the water-side!

XXV.

The staff I well remember which upbore
The bending body of my active sire;
His seat beneath the honeyed sycamore
Where the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire
When market-morning came, the neat attire

With which, though bent on haste, myself I decked
Our watchful house-dog, that would tease and tir
The stranger till its barking-fit I checked ;
The red-breast, known for years, which at my case-
ment pecked.

XXVI.

The suns of twenty summers danced along, —
Too little marked how fast they rolled away :
But, through severe mischance and cruel wrong,
My father's substance fell into decay :
We toiled and struggled, hoping for a day
When Fortune might put on a kinder look ;
But vain were wishes, efforts vain as they ;
He from his old hereditary nook
Must part ; the summons came ; — our final leave
we took.

XXVII.

It was indeed a miserable hour
When, from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
Peering above the trees, the steeple tower
That on his marriage day sweet music made !
Till then, he hoped his bones might there be laid
Close by my mother in their native bowers :
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed ; —
I could not pray . through tears that fell in showers
Glimmered our dear-loved home, alas! no longer ours!

XXVIII.

There was a Youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say ;
Mid the green mountains many a thoughtless song

We two had sung, like gladsome birds in May;
When we began to tire of childish play,
We seemed still more and more to prize each other
We talked of marriage and our marriage day;
And I in truth did love him like a brother,
For never could I hope to meet with such another

XXIX.

Two years were passed since to a distant town
He had repaired to ply a gainful trade:
What tears of bitter grief, till then unknown!
What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed!
To him we turned: — we had no other aid:
Like one revived, upon his neck I wept;
And her whom he had loved in joy, he said,
He well could love in grief; his faith he kept;
And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

XXX.

We lived in peace and comfort; and were blest
With daily bread, by constant toil supplied.
Three lovely babes had lain upon my breast;
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
And knew not why. My happy father died,
When threatened war reduced the children's meal:
Thrice happy! that for him the grave could hide
The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
And tears that flowed for ills which patience might not heal.

XXXI.

T was a hard change; an evil time was come;
We had no hope, and no relief could gain:

But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
Beat round to clear the streets of want and pain.
My husband's arms now only served to strain
Me and his children hungering in his view;
In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain:
To join those miserable men he flew,
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we drew.

XXXII.

There were we long neglected, and we bore
Much sorrow ere the fleet its anchor weighed.
Green fields before us, and our native shore,
We breathed a pestilential air, that made
Ravage for which no knell was heard. We prayed
For our departure; wished and wished,—nor knew
'Mid that long sickness and those hopes delayed,
That happier days we never more must view.
The parting signal streamed,—at last the land withdrew.

XXXIII.

But the calm summer season now was past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains high before the howling blast,
And many perished in the whirlwind's sweep.
We gazed with terror on their gloomy sleep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should rue:
We reached the western world, a poor devoted crew.

XXXIV.

The pains and plagues that on our heads came down
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would unman the firmest heart to hear.
All perished, — all in one remorseless year, —
Husband and children! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored."

XXXV.

Here paused she, of all present thought forlorn,
Nor voice, nor sound, that moment's pain expressed,
Yet Nature, with excess of grief o'erborne,
From her full eyes their watery load released.
He too was mute: and, ere her weeping ceased,
He rose, and to the ruin's portal went,
And saw the dawn opening the silvery east
With rays of promise, north and southward sent,
And soon with crimson fire kindled the firmament.

XXXVI.

"O come," he cried, "come, after weary night
Of such rough storm, this happy change to view."
So forth she came, and eastward looked; the sight
Over her brow like dawn of gladness threw;
Upon her cheek, to which its youthful hue
Seemed to return, dried the last lingering tear,
And from her grateful heart a fresh one drew:
The whilst her comrade to her pensive cheer
Tempered fit words of hope; and the lark warbled near.

XXXVII.

They looked and saw a lengthening road, and wain
That rang down a bare slope not far remote:
The barrows glistered bright with drops of rain,
Whistled the wagoner with merry note,
The cock far off sounded his clarion throat;
But town, or farm, or hamlet, none they viewed,
Only were told there stood a lonely cot
A long mile thence. While thither they pursued
Their way, the woman thus her mournful tale renewed.

XXXVIII.

"Peaceful as this immeasurable plain
Is now, by beams of dawning light imprest,
In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main;
The very ocean hath its hour of rest.
I too forgot the heavings of my breast.
How quiet 'round me ship and ocean were!
As quiet all within me. I was blest,
And looked, and fed upon the silent air
Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair.

XXXIX.

Ah! how unlike those late terrific sleeps,
And groans that rage of racking famine spoke;
The unburied dead that lay in festering heaps,
The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke,
The shriek that from the distant battle broke,
The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host,
Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke

To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish tossed,
Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost!

XL.

Some mighty gulf of separation passed,
I seemed transported to another world;
A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
The impatient mariner the sail unfurled,
And, whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home
And from all hope I was for ever hurled.
For me, farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might come.

XLI.

And oft I thought (my fancy was so strong)
That I, at last, a resting-place had found;
'Here will I dwell,' said I, 'my whole life long,
Roaming the illimitable waters round;
Here will I live, of all but Heaven disowned,
And end my days upon the peaceful flood.'
To break my dream, the vessel reached its bound
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food

XLII.

No help I sought; in sorrow turned adrift,
Was hopeless, as if cast on some bare rock;
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor raised my hand at any door to knock.
I lay where, with his drowsy mates, the cock

From the cross-timber of an out-house hung:
Dismally tolled, that night, the city clock!
At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
Nor to the beggar's language could I fit my tongue.

XLIII.

So passed a second day; and, when the third
Was come, I tried in vain the crowd's resort.
— In deep despair, by frightful wishes stirred,
Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort;
There, pains which nature could no more support,
With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall;
And, after many interruptions short
Of hideous sense, I sank, nor step could crawl:
Unsought for was the help that did my life recall.

XLIV.

Borne to a hospital, I lay with brain
Drowsy and weak, with shattered memory;
I heard my neighbors in their beds complain
Of many things which never troubled me, —
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
Of looks where common kindness had no part,
Of service done with cold formality,
Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
And groans which, as they said, might make a
dead man start.

XLV.

These things just served to stir the slumbering sense
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
With strength did memory return; and, thence
Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,

At houses, men, and common light amazed.
The lanes I sought, and, as the sun retired,
Came where beneath the trees a fagot blazed;
The travellers saw me weep, my fate inquired,
And gave me food — and rest, more welcome, more
desired.

XLVI.

Rough potters seemed they, trading soberly
With panniered asses driven from door to door;
But life of happier sort set forth to me,
And other joys my fancy to allure, —
The bagpipe dinning on the midnight moor
In barn uplighted; and companions boon,
Well met from far with revelry secure
Among the forest glades, while jocund June
Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

XLVII.

But ill they suited me, — those journeys dark
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch
To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
Or hang on tiptoe at the lifted latch.
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brood-
ing still.

XLVIII.

What could I do, unaided and unblest?
My father! gone was every friend of thine

And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help; and, after marriage such as mine,
With little kindness would to me incline.
Nor was I then for toil or service fit;
My deep-drawn sighs no effort could confine;
In open air forgetful would I sit
Whole hours, with idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

XLIX.

The roads I paced, I loitered through the fields;
Contentedly, yet sometimes self-accused,
Trusted my life to what chance bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The ground I for my bed have often used:
But what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth
Is that I have my inner self abused,
Foregone the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

L.

Through tears the rising sun I oft have viewed,
Through tears have seen him towards that world descend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude:
Three years a wanderer, now my course I bend—
Oh! tell me whither — for no earthly friend
Have I." — She ceased, and weeping turned away
As if because her tale was at an end,
She wept; because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay

LI

True sympathy the Sailor's looks expressed,
His looks, — for pondering he was mute the while
Of social Order's care for wretchedness,
Of Time's sure help to calm and reconcile,
Joy's second spring and Hope's long-treasured smile,
'T was not for *him* to speak, — a man so tried.
Yet, to relieve her heart, in friendly style
Proverbial words of comfort he applied,
And not in vain, while they went pacing side by side.

LII.

Erelong, from heaps of turf, before their sight,
Together smoking in the sun's slant beam,
Rise various wreaths, that into one unite,
Which high and higher mounts with silver gleam;
Fair spectacle! — but instantly a scream
Thence bursting shrill did all remark prevent;
They paused, and heard a hoarser voice blaspheme,
And female cries. Their course they thither bent,
And met a man who foamed with anger vehement.

LIII.

A woman stood with quivering lips and pale,
And, pointing to a little child that lay
Stretched on the ground, began a piteous tale;
How in a simple freak of thoughtless play
He had provoked his father, who straightway,
As if each blow were deadlier than the last,
Struck the poor innocent. Pallid with dismay

The Soldier's Widow heard and stood aghast;
And stern looks on the man her gray-haired Comrade cast.

LIV.

His voice with indignation rising high
Such further deed in manhood's name forbade;
The peasant, wild in passion, made reply
With bitter insult and revilings sad;
Asked him in scorn what business there he had;
What kind of plunder he was hunting now;
The gallows would one day of him be glad; —
Though inward anguish damped the Sailor's brow
Yet calm he seemed as thoughts so poignant would allow.

LV.

Softly he stroked the child, who lay outstretched
With face to earth; and, as the boy turned round
His battered head, a groan the Sailor fetched,
As if he saw — there and upon that ground —
Strange repetition of the deadly wound
He had himself inflicted. Through his brain
At once the griding iron passage found;
Deluge of tender thoughts then rushed amain,
Nor could his sunken eyes the starting tear restrain.

LVI.

Within himself he said, What hearts have we!
The blessing this a father gives his child!
Yet happy thou, poor boy! compared with me,
Suffering, not doing, ill, — fate far more mild.
The stranger's looks and tears of wrath beguiled

The father, and relenting thoughts awoke;
He kissed his son: — so all was reconciled.
Then, with a voice which inward trouble broke
Ere to his lips it came, the Sailor them bespoke.

LVII

"Bad is the world, and hard is the world's law,
Even for the man who wears the warmest fleece
Much need have ye that time more closely draw
The bond of nature, all unkindness cease,
And that among so few there still be peace:
Else can ye hope but with such numerous foes
Your pains shall ever with your years increase?" —
While from his heart the appropriate lesson flows,
A correspondent calm stole gently o'er his woes.

LVIII.

Forthwith the pair passed on; and down they look
Into a narrow valley's pleasant scene
Where wreaths of vapor tracked a winding brook,
That babbled on through groves and meadows green;
A low-roofed house peeped out the trees between
The dripping groves resound with cheerful lays,
And melancholy lowings intervene
Of scattered herds, that in the meadow graze,
Some amid lingering shade, some touched by the sun's rays.

LIX.

They saw and heard, and, winding with the road
Down a thick wood, they dropt into the vale;
Comfort by prouder mansions unbestowed

Their wearied frames, she hoped, would soon re
gale.
Erelong they reached that cottage in the dale:
It was a rustic inn; — the board was spread,
The milkmaid followed with her brimming pail,
And lustily the master carved the bread,
Kindly the housewife pressed, and they in comfort
fed.

LX.

Their breakfast done, the pair, though loth, must
part;
Wanderers whose course no longer now agrees.
She rose and bade farewell! and, while her heart
Struggled with tears, nor could its sorrow ease,
She left him there; for, clustering round his knees,
With his oak-staff the cottage children played;
And soon she reached a spot o'erhung with trees
And banks of ragged earth; beneath the shade,
Across the pebbly road, a little runnel strayed.

LXI.

A cart and horse beside the rivulet stood;
Checkering the canvas roof the sunbeams shone.
She saw the carman bend to scoop the flood
As the wain fronted her, — wherein lay one,
A pale-faced Woman, in disease far gone.
The carman wet her lips as well behoved;
Bed under her lean body there was none,
Though even to die near one she most had loved
She could not of herself those wasted limbs have
moved.

LXII.

The Soldier's Widow learned with honest pain,
And homefelt force of sympathy sincere,
Why thus that worn-out wretch must there sustain
The jolting road and morning air severe.
The wain pursued its way; and following near,
In pure compassion, she her steps retraced
Far as the cottage. "A sad sight is here,"
She cried aloud; and forth ran out in haste
The friends whom she had left but a few minutes past.

LXIII.

While to the door with eager speed they ran,
From her bare straw the Woman half upraised
Her bony visage, gaunt and deadly wan;
No pity asking, on the group she gazed
With a dim eye, distracted and amazed;
Then sank upon her straw with feeble moan.
Fervently cried the housewife, "God be praised,
I have a house that I can call my own;
Nor shall she perish there, untended and alone!"

LXIV.

So in they bear her to the chimney seat,
And busily, though yet with fear, untie
Her garments, and, to warm her icy feet
And chafe her temples, careful hands apply.
Nature reviving, with a deep-drawn sigh
She strove, and not in vain, her head to rear;
Then said, "I thank you all; if I must die,

The God in heaven my prayers for you will hear;
Till now I did not think my end had been so near

LXV.

"Barred every comfort labor could procure,
Suffering what no endurance could assuage,
I was compelled to seek my father's door,
Though loth to be a burden on his age.
But sickness stopped me in an early stage
Of my sad journey; and within the wain
They placed me, — there to end life's pilgrimage,
Unless beneath your roof I may remain:
For I shall never see my father's door again.

LXVI.

"My life, Heaven knows, hath long been burdensome;
But, if I have not meekly suffered, meek
May my end be! Soon will this voice be dumb:
Should child of mine e'er wander hither, speak
Of me, say that the worm is on my cheek. —
Torn from our hut, that stood beside the sea
Near Portland lighthouse in a lonesome creek,
My husband served in sad captivity
On shipboard, bound till peace or death should set him free.

LXVII.

"A sailor's wife, I knew a widow's cares,
Yet two sweet little ones partook my bed;
Hope cheered my dreams, and to my daily prayers
Our Heavenly Father granted each day's bread
Till one was found by stroke of violence dead,

Whose body near our cottage chanced to lie;
A dire suspicion drove us from our shed;
In vain to find a friendly face we try,
Nor could we live together those poor boys and I;

LXVIII.

"For evil tongues made oath how on that day
My husband lurked about the neighborhood;
Now he had fled, and whither none could say,
And *he* had done the deed in the dark wood —
Near his own home! — but he was mild and good;
Never on earth was gentler creature seen;
He 'd not have robbed the raven of its food.
My husband's lovingkindness stood between
Me and all worldly harms and wrongs however keen."

LXIX.

Alas! the thing she told with laboring breath
The Sailor knew too well. That wickedness
His hand had wrought; and when, in the hour of death,
He saw his Wife's lips move his name to bless
With her last words, unable to suppress
His anguish, with his heart he ceased to strive;
And, weeping loud in this extreme distress,
He cried, "Do pity me! That thou shouldst live
I neither ask nor wish; forgive me, but forgive!'

LXX.

To tell the change that Voice within her wrought
Nature by sign or sound made no essay;
A sudden joy surprised expiring thought,

And every mortal pang dissolved away.
Borne gently to a bed, in death she lay;
Yet still, while over her the husband bent,
A look was in her face which seemed to say,
"Be blest: by sight of thee from heaven was sent
Peace to my parting soul, the fulness of content."

LXXI.

She slept in peace, — his pulses throbbed and stopped;
Breathless he gazed upon her face, — then took
Her hand in his, and raised it, but both dropped
When on his own he cast a rueful look.
His ears were never silent; sleep forsook
His burning eyelids, stretched and stiff as lead;
All night from time to time under him shook
The floor, as he lay shuddering on his bed;
And oft he groaned aloud, "O God, that I were dead!"

LXXII.

The Soldier's Widow lingered in the cot;
And, when he rose, he thanked her pious care,
Through which his Wife, to that kind shelter brought,
Died in his arms; and with those thanks a prayer
He breathed for her, and for that merciful pair.
The corse interred, not one hour he remained
Beneath their roof, but to the open air
A burden, now with fortitude sustained,
He bore within a breast where dreadful quiet reigned.

LXXIII.

Confirmed of purpose, fearlessly prepared
For act and suffering, to the city straight
He journeyed, and forthwith his crime declared:
"And from your doom," he added, "now I wait,
Nor let it linger long, the murderer's fate."
Not ineffectual was that piteous claim:
"O welcome sentence which will end, though late,"
He said, "the pangs that to my conscience came
Out of that deed. My trust, Saviour! is in thy
name!"

LXXIV.

His fate was pitied. Him in iron case
(Reader, forgive the intolerable thought)
They hung not: — no one on *his* form or face
Could gaze, as on a show by idlers sought;
No kindred sufferer, to his death-place brought
By lawless curiosity or chance,
When into storms the evening sky is wrought,
Upon his swinging corse an eye can glance,
And drop, as he once dropped, in miserable trance

THE BORDERERS.

A TRAGEDY.

(COMPOSED 1795-6.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARMADUKE.	Host.
OSWALD.	Forester.
WALLACE. (Of the Band of Borderers.)	ELDRED, a Peasant.
LACY. (Of the Band of Borderers.)	Peasant, Pilgrims, &c.
LENNOX. (Of the Band of Borderers.)	
HERBERT.	IDONEA.
WILFRED, Servant to MARMADUKE.	Female Beggar.
	ELEANOR, Wife to ELDRED

SCENE, *Borders of England and Scotland.*

TIME, *the Reign of Henry III.*

READERS already acquainted with my Poems will recognize in the following composition, some eight or ten lines, which I have not scrupled to retain in the places where they originally stood. It is proper, however, to add, that they would not have been used elsewhere, if I had foreseen the time when I might be induced to publish this Tragedy.

February 28, 1842.

ACT I.

SCENE, *road in a wood.*

WALLACE *and* LACY.

Lacy. The Troop will be impatient; let us hie
Back to our post, and strip the Scottish Foray
Of their rich spoil, ere they recross the Border.

-- Pity that our young Chief will have no part
In this good service.

Wal. Rather let us grieve
That, in the undertaking which has caused
His absence, he hath sought, whate'er his aim,
Companionship with one of crooked ways,
From whose perverted soul can come no good
To our confiding, open-hearted Leader.

Lacy. True; and, remembering how the Band have proved
That Oswald finds small favor in our sight,
Well may we wonder he has gained such power
Over our much-loved Captain.

Wal. I have heard
Of some dark deed to which in early life
His passion drove him, — then a voyager
Upon the midland Sea. You knew his bearing
In Palestine?

Lacy. Where he despised alike
Mohammedan and Christian. But enough;
Let us begone, — the Band may else be foiled.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter MARMADUKE *and* WILFRED.

Wil. Be cautious, my dear Master!

Mar. I perceive
That fear is like a cloak which old men huddle
About their love, as if to keep it warm.

Wil. Nay, but I grieve that we should part. This stranger,
For such he is —

Mar. Your busy fancies, Wilfred,
Might tempt me to a smile; but what of him?
Wil. You know that you have saved his life.
Mar. I know it.
Wil. And that he hates you! — Pardon me, perhaps
That word was hasty.
Mar. Fy! no more of it.
Wil. Dear Master! gratitude 's a heavy burden
To a proud soul. — Nobody loves this Oswald, —
Yourself, you do not love him.
Mar. I do more,
I honor him. Strong feelings to his heart
Are natural; and from no one can be learnt
More of man's thoughts and ways than his experience
Has given him power to teach: and then for courage
And enterprise, — what perils hath he shunned?
What obstacles hath he failed to overcome?
Answer these questions, from our common knowledge,
And be at rest.
Wil. Oh, Sir!
Mar. Peace, my good Wilfred
Repair to Liddesdale, and tell the Band
I shall be with them in two days, at farthest.
Wil. May He whose eye is over all protect you.
[*Exit.*

Enter OSWALD (*a bunch of plants in his hand.*)

Osw. This wood is rich in plants and curious simples.

Mar. (*looking at them.*) The wild rose, and the
poppy, and the nightshade:
Which is your favorite, Oswald?
Osw. That which, while it is
Strong to destroy, is also strong to heal. —
[*Looking forward.*
Not yet in sight! — We'll saunter here awhile;
They cannot mount the hill, by us unseen.
Mar. (*a letter in his hand.*) It is no common
thing when one like you
Performs these delicate services, and therefore
I feel myself much bounden to you, Oswald;
'T is a strange letter this! —You saw her write it?
Osw. And saw the tears with which she blotted it
Mar. And nothing less would satisfy him?
Osw. No less
For that another in his Child's affection
Should hold a place, as if 't were robbery,
He seemed to quarrel with the very thought.
Besides, I know not what strange prejudice
Is rooted in his mind, this Band of ours,
Which you 've collected for the noblest ends,
Along the confines of the Esk and Tweed
To guard the Innocent, — he calls us "Outlaws"
And, for yourself, in plain terms he asserts
This garb was taken up that indolence
Might want no cover, and rapacity
Be better fed.
Mar. Ne'er may I own the heart
That cannot feel for one, helpless as he is.

Osw. Thou know'st me for a man not easily
moved,
Yet was I grievously provoked to think
Of what I witnessed.
Mar. This day will suffice
To end her wrongs.
Osw. But if the blind man's tale
Should *yet* be true?
Mar. Would it were possible!
Did not the Soldier tell thee that himself,
And others who survived the wreck, beheld
The Baron Herbert perish in the waves
Upon the coast of Cyprus?
Osw. Yes, even so,
And I had heard the like before: in sooth,
The tale of this his quondam Barony
Is cunningly devised; and, on the back
Of his forlorn appearance, could not fail
To make the proud and vain his tributaries,
And stir the pulse of lazy charity.
The seignories of Herbert are in Devon;
We, neighbors of the Esk and Tweed: 't is much
The Arch-impostor ——
Mar. Treat him gently, Oswald
Though I have never seen his face, methinks,
There cannot come a day when I shall cease
To love him. I remember, when a boy
Of scarcely seven years' growth, beneath the Elm
That casts its shade over our village school,
'T was my delight to sit and hear Idonea

Repeat her Father's terrible adventures,
Till all the band of playmates wept together;
And that was the beginning of my love.
And, through all converse of our later years,
An image of this old man still was present,
When I had been most happy. Pardon me
If this be idly spoken.

Osw. See, they come,
Two travellers!

Mar. (*points.*) The woman is Idonea.

Osw. And leading Herbert.

Mar. We must let them pass, —
This thicket will conceal us. [*They step aside.*

Enter IDONEA, *leading* HERBERT, *blind.*

Idon. Dear Father, you sigh deeply; ever since
We left the willow shade by the brook-side,
Your natural breathing has been troubled.

Her. Nay,
You are too fearful; yet must I confess,
Our march of yesterday had better suited
A firmer step than mine.

Idon. That dismal Moor, —
In spite of all the larks that cheered our path,
I never can forgive it: but how steadily
You paced along, when the bewildering moonlight
Mocked me with many a strange fantastic shape! —
I thought the Convent never would appear;
It seemed to move away from us: and yet,
That you are thus, the fault is mine; for the air

Was soft and warm, no dew lay on the grass,
And midway on the waste ere night had fallen
I spied a Covert walled and roofed with sods, —
A miniature; belike some Shepherd-boy,
Who might have found a nothing-doing hour
Heavier than work, raised it: within that hut
We might have made a kindly bed of heath,
And thankfully there rested side by side
Wrapped in our cloaks, and, with recruited strength,
Have hailed the morning sun. But cheerily, Father, —
That staff of yours, I could almost have heart
To fling 't away from you: you make no use
Of me, or of my strength; — come, let me feel
That you do press upon me. There, — indeed
You are quite exhausted. Let us rest awhile
On this green bank. [*He sits down.*

Her. (*after some time.*) Idonea, you are silent.
And I divine the cause.

Idon. Do not reproach me:
I pondered patiently your wish and will
When I gave way to your request; and now,
When I behold the ruins of that face,
Those eyeballs dark, — dark beyond hope of light
And think that they were blasted for my sake,
The name of Marmaduke is blown away:
Father, I would not change that sacred feeling
For all this world can give.

Her. Nay, be composed
Few minutes gone, a faintness overspread

My frame, and I bethought me of two things
I ne'er had heart to separate, — my grave,
And thee, my Child!

Idon. Believe me, honored Sire!
'T is weariness that breeds these gloomy fancies,
And you mistake the cause: you hear the woods
Resound with music, could you see the sun,
And look upon the pleasant face of Nature ——

Her. I comprehend thee — I should be as cheerful
As if we two were twins; two songsters bred
In the same nest, my spring-time one with thine.
My fancies, fancies if they be, are such
As come, dear Child! from a far deeper source
Than bodily weariness. While here we sit
I feel my strength returning. — The bequest
Of thy kind patroness, which to receive
We have thus far adventured, will suffice
To save thee from the extreme of penury;
But when thy Father must lie down and die,
How wilt thou stand alone?

Idon. Is he not strong?
Is he not valiant?

Her. Am I then so soon
Forgotten? have my warnings passed so quickly
Out of thy mind? My dear, my only Child;
Thou wouldst be leaning on a broken reed, —
This Marmaduke ——

Idon. O could you hear his voice:
Alas! you do not know him. He is one
I wot not what ill tongue has wronged him with
you)

All gentleness and love. His face bespeaks
A deep and simple meekness: and that soul,
Which with the motion of a virtuous act
Flashes a look of terror upon guilt,
Is, after conflict, quiet as the ocean,
By a miraculous finger stilled at once.

Her. Unhappy Woman!

Idon. Nay, it was my duty
Thus much to speak; but think not I forget —
Dear Father! how *could* I forget and live —
You and the story of that doleful night
When, Antioch blazing to her topmost towers,
You rushed into the murderous flames, returned
Blind as the grave, but, as you oft have told me,
Clasping your infant Daughter to your heart.

Her. Thy Mother too! — scarce had I gained the door,
I caught her voice; she threw herself upon me,
I felt thy infant brother in her arms;
She saw my blasted face, — a tide of soldiers
That instant rushed between us, and I heard
Her last death-shriek, distinct among a thousand.

Idon. Nay, Father, stop not; let me hear it all.

Her. Dear Daughter! precious relic of that time, —
For my old age, it doth remain with thee
To make it what thou wilt. Thou hast been told
That when, on our return from Palestine,
I found how my domains had been usurped,
I took thee in my arms, and we began

Our wanderings together. Providence
At length conducted us to Rossland, — there,
Our melancholy story moved a stranger
To take thee to her home; and for myself,
Soon after, the good Abbot of St. Cuthbert's
Supplied my helplessness with food and raiment,
And, as thou know'st, gave me that humble Cot
Where now we dwell. — For many years I bore
Thy absence, till old age and fresh infirmities
Exacted thy return, and our reunion.
I did not think that, during that long absence,
My Child, forgetful of the name of Herbert,
Had given her love to a wild Freebooter,
Who here, upon the borders of the Tweed,
Doth prey alike on two distracted countries,
Traitor to both.

Idon. Oh, could you hear his voice!
I will not call on Heaven to vouch for me,
But let this kiss speak what is in my heart.

Enter a Peasant.

Pea. Good morrow, Strangers! If you want a Guide,
Let me have leave to serve you!

Idon. My companion
Hath need of rest; the sight of hut or hostel
Would be most welcome.

Pea. Yon white hawthorn gained,
You will look down into a dell, and there
Will see an ash from which a sign-board hangs;
The house is hidden by the shade. Old Man,

You seem worn out with travel, — shall I support
you?

Her. I thank you; but, a resting-place so near,
'T were wrong to trouble you.

Pea. God speed you both.

[*Exit* Peasant.

Her. Idonea, we must part. Be not alarmed —
'T is but for a few days — a thought has struck me.

Idon. That I should leave you at this house, and
thence
Proceed alone. It shall be so; for strength
Would fail you ere our journey's end be reached.

[*Exit* HERBERT *supported by* IDONEA.

Re-enter MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD.

Mar. This instant will we stop him ——

Osw. Be not hasty,
For, sometimes, in despite of my conviction,
He tempted me to think the story true;
'T is plain he loves the Maid, and what he said
That savored of aversion to thy name
Appeared the genuine color of his soul, —
Anxiety lest mischief should befall her
After his death.

Mar. I have been much deceived.

Osw. But sure he loves the Maiden, and never
love
Could find delight to nurse itself so strangely,
Thus to torment her with *inventions!* — death —
There must be truth in this.

Mar Truth in his story

He must have felt it then, known what it was,
And in such wise to rack her gentle heart
Had been tenfold cruelty.
Osw. Strange pleasures
Do we poor mortals cater for ourselves!
To see him thus provoke her tenderness
With tales of weakness and infirmity!
'd wager on his life for twenty years.
Mar. We will not waste an hour in such a cause.
Osw. Why, this is noble! shake her off at once.
Mar. Her virtues are his instruments.— A Man
Who has so practised on the world's cold sense
May well deceive his Child. What! leave her thus,
A prey to a deceiver? — no — no — no —
'T is but a word and then ——
Osw. Something is here
More than we see, or whence this strong aversion?
Marmaduke! I suspect unworthy tales
Have reached his ear; you have had enemies.
Mar. Enemies! — Of his own coinage.
Osw. That may be,
But wherefore slight protection such as you
Have power to yield? perhaps he looks elsewhere.—
I am perplexed.
Mar. What hast thou heard or seen?
Osw. No — no — the thing stands clear of mystery;
(As you have said) he coins himself the slander
With which he taints her ear; — for a plain reason;
He dreads the presence of a virtuous man

Like you; he knows your eye would search his heart,
Your justice stamp upon his evil deeds
The punishment they merit. All is plain:
It cannot be ——
Mar. What cannot be?
Osw. Yet that a Father
Should in his love admit no rivalship,
And torture thus the heart of his own Child ——
Mar. Nay, you abuse my friendship!
Osw. Heaven forbid! —
There was a circumstance, trifling indeed —
It struck me at the time — yet I believe
I never should have thought of it again
But for the scene which we by chance have witnessed.
Mar. What is your meaning?
Osw. Two days gone I saw,
Though at a distance and he was disguised,
Hovering round Herbert's door, a man whose figure
Resembled much that cold voluptuary,
The villain, Clifford. He hates you, and he knows
Where he can stab you deepest.
Mar. Clifford never
Would stoop to skulk about a cottage door, —
It could not be.
Osw. And yet I now remember,
That, when your praise was warm upon my tongue
And the blind Man was told how you had rescued
A maiden from the ruffian violence

Of this same Clifford, he became impatient
And would not hear me.

Mar. No — it cannot be —
I dare not trust myself with such a thought —
Yet whence this strange aversion? You are a man
Not used to rash conjectures ——

Osw. If you deem it
A thing worth further notice, we must act
With caution, sift the matter artfully.

[*Exeunt* MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD.

SCENE, *the door of the Hostel.*

HERBERT, IDONEA, *and* Host.

Her. (*seated.*) As I am dear to you, remember, Child!
This last request.

Idon. You know me, Sire; farewell!

Her. And are you going then? Come, come, Idonea,
We must not part, — I have measured many a league
When these old limbs had need of rest, — and now
I will not play the sluggard.

Idon. Nay, sit down.

[*Turning to* Host.

Good Host, such tendence as you would expect
From your own children, if yourself were sick,
Let this old Man find at your hands; poor Leader,

[*Looking at the dog.*

We soon shall meet again. If thou neglect

This charge of thine, then ill befall thee! — Look,
The little fool is loth to stay behind.
Sir Host! by all the love you bear to courtesy,
Take care of him, and feed the truant well.
Host. Fear not, I will obey you; — but one so young,
And one so fair, it goes against my heart
That you should travel unattended, Lady! —
I have a palfrey and a groom: the lad
Shall squire you, (would it not be better, Sir?)
And for less fee than I would let him run
For any lady I have seen this twelvemonth.
Idon. You know, Sir, I have been too long your guard
Not to have learnt to laugh at little fears.
Why, if a wolf should leap from out a thicket,
A look of mine would send him scouring back,
Unless I differ from the thing I am
When you are by my side.
Her. Idonea, wolves
Are not the enemies that move my fears.
Idon. No more, I pray, of this. Three days at farthest
Will bring me back — protect him, Saints — farewell! [*Exit* IDONEA
Host. 'Tis never drought with us — St. Cuthbert and his Pilgrims,
Thanks to them, are to us a stream of comfort:
Pity the Maiden did not wait awhile;
She could not, Sir, have failed of company.

Her. Now she is gone, I fain would call her back.
Host. (*calling.*) Holla!
Her. No, no, the business must be done. —
What means this riotous noise?
Host. The villagers
Are flocking in — a wedding festival —
That 's all. God save you, Sir.

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Ha! as I live,
The Baron Herbert.
Host. Mercy, the Baron Herbert!
Osw. So far into your journey! on my life,
You are a lusty traveller. But how fare you?
Her. Well as the wreck I am permits. And you, Sir?
Osw. I do not see Idonea.
Her. Dutiful Girl,
She has gone before, to spare my weariness.
But what has brought you hither?
Osw. A slight affair
That will be soon despatched.
Her. Did Marmaduke
Receive that letter?
Osw. Be at peace. — The tie
Is broken, you will hear no more of *him.*
Her. This is true comfort, thanks a thousand times!
That noise! — would I had gone with her as far
As the Lord Clifford's Castle I have heard

That, in his milder moods, he has expressed
Compassion for me. His influence is great
With Henry, our good King; — the Baron might
Have heard my suit, and urged my plea at Court.
No matter, — he 's a dangerous man. — That
noise! —
'T is too disorderly for sleep or rest.
Idonea would have fears for me, — the Convent
Will give me quiet lodging. You have a boy, good
Host,
And he must lead me back.
Osw. You are most lucky;
I have been waiting in the wood hard by
For a companion. Here he comes; our journey

Enter MARMADUKE.

Lies on your way; accept us as your guides.
Her. Alas! I creep so slowly.
Osw. Never fear;
We 'll not complain of that.
Her. My limbs are stiff
And need repose. Could you but wait an hour?
Osw. Most willingly! — Come, let me lead you in,
And, while you take your rest, think not of us;
We 'll stroll into the wood; lean on my arm.
[*Conducts* HERBERT *into the house.* *Exit* MARMADUKE.

Enter Villagers.

Osw. (*to himself, coming out of the Hostel.*) I have prepared a most apt Instrument.

The Vagrant must, no doubt, be loitering somewhere
About this ground; she hath a tongue well skilled,
By mingling natural matter of her own
With all the daring fictions I have taught her,
To win belief, such as my plot requires.

[*Exit* OSWALD

Enter more Villagers, *a* Musician *among them.*

Host (*to them*). Into the court, my Friend, and perch yourself
Aloft upon the elm-tree. Pretty Maids,
Garlands and flowers, and cakes and merry thoughts,
Are here, to send the sun into the west
More speedily than you belike would wish.

SCENE *changes to the Wood adjoining the Hostel.*— MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD *entering.*

Mar. I would fain hope that we deceive ourselves:
When first I saw him sitting there, alone,
It struck upon my heart I know not how.

Osw. To-day will clear up all. — You marked a Cottage,
That ragged Dwelling, close beneath a rock
By the brook-side: it is the abode of one,
A Maiden innocent till ensnared by Clifford,
Who soon grew weary of her; but, alas!

What she had seen and suffered turned her brain.
Cast off by her Betrayer, she dwells alone,
Nor moves her hands to any needful work:
She eats her food which every day the peasants
Bring to her hut; and so the Wretch has lived
Ten years; and no one ever heard her voice;
But every night at the first stroke of twelve
She quits her house, and, in the neighboring Churchyard
Upon the selfsame spot, in rain or storm,
She paces out the hour 'twixt twelve and one, —
She paces round and round an Infant's grave.
And in the Churchyard sod her feet have worn
A hollow ring; they say it is knee-deep ——
Ah! what is here?

[*A female* Beggar *rises up, rubbing her eyes as if in sleep, — a Child in her arms.*

Beg. Oh! Gentlemen, I thank you
I've had the saddest dream that ever troubled
The heart of living creature. — My poor Babe
Was crying, as I thought, crying for bread
When I had none to give him; whereupon,
I put a slip of foxglove in his hand,
Which pleased him so, that he was hushed at once
When, into one of those same spotted bells
A bee came darting, which the Child with joy
Imprisoned there, and held it to its ear,
And suddenly grew black, as he would die.

Mar. We have no time for this, my babbling Gossip;
Here's what will comfort you. [*Gives her money*

Beg. The Saints reward you
For this good deed! — Well, Sirs, this passed away;
And afterwards I fancied a strange dog,
Trotting alone along the beaten road,
Came to my child as by my side he slept,
And, fondling, licked his face, then on a sudden
Snapped fierce to make a morsel of his head:
But here he is, [*kissing the Child,*] it must have been a dream.

Osw. When next inclined to sleep, take my advice,
And put your head, good Woman, under cover.

Beg. O, Sir, you would not talk thus, if you knew
What life is this of ours, how sleep will master
The weary-worn. — You gentlefolk have got
Warm chambers to your wish. I 'd rather be
A stone than what I am. — But two nights gone,
The darkness overtook me, — wind and rain
Beat hard upon my head, — and yet I saw
A glowworm, through the covert of the furze,
Shine calmly as if nothing ailed the sky:
At which I half accused the God in Heaven. —
You must forgive me.

Osw. Ay, and if you think
The Fairies are to blame, and you should chide
Your favorite saint, — no matter, — this good day
Has made amends.

Beg. Thanks to you both; but, O Sir
How would you like to travel on whole hours

As I have done, my eyes upon the ground,
Expecting still, I knew not how, to find
A piece of money glittering though the dust.
Mar. This woman is a prater. Pray, good Lady!
Do you tell fortunes?
Beg. O Sir, you are like the rest.
This little one, — it cuts me to the heart, —
Well! they might turn a beggar from their doors,
But there are mothers who can see the babe
Here at my breast, and ask me where I bought it:
This they can do, and look upon my face;
But you, Sir, should be kinder.
Mar. Come hither, Fathers,
And learn what nature is from this poor wretch
Beg. Ay, Sir, there's nobody that feels for us.
Why now, — but yesterday I overtook
A blind old graybeard and accosted him,
I' th' name of all the Saints, and by the Mass
He should have used me better! — Charity!
If you can melt a rock, he is your man;
But I'll be even with him, — here again
Have I been waiting for him.
Osw. Well, but softly,
Who is it that hath wronged you?
Beg. Mark you me
I'll point him out; — a Maiden is his guide,
Lovely as Spring's first rose; a little dog,
Tied by a woollen cord, moves on before,
With look as sad as he were dumb; the cur,

I owe him no ill-will, but in good sooth
He does his master credit.
Mar. As I live,
T is Herbert and no other!
Beg. 'T is a feast to see him,
Lank as a ghost and tall, his shoulders bent,
And long beard white with age; — yet evermore,
As if he were the only Saint on earth,
He turns his face to heaven.
Osw. But why so violent
Against this venerable man?
Beg. I'll tell you:
He has the very hardest heart on earth;
I had as lief turn to the Friar's school
And knock for entrance, in mid-holiday.
Mar. But to your story.
Beg. I was saying, Sir —
Well! — he has often spurned me like a toad,
But yesterday was worse than all; — at last
I overtook him, Sirs, my Babe and I,
And begged a little aid for charity:
But he was snappish as a cottage cur.
Well then, says I — I 'll out with it; at which
I cast a look upon the Girl, and felt
As if my heart would burst; and so I left him.
Osw. I think, good Woman, you are the very person
Whom, but some few days past, I saw in Eskdale,
At Herbert's door.
Beg. Ay; and if truth were known,
I have good business there.

Osw. I met you at the threshold.
And he seemed angry.
Beg. Angry! well he might;
And long as I can stir I 'll dog him. — Yesterday
To serve me so, and knowing that he owes
The best of all he has to me and mine.
But 't is all over now. — That good old Lady
Has left a power of riches; and I say it,
If there 's a lawyer in the land, the knave
Shall give me half.
Osw. What 's this? — I fear, good Woman,
You have been insolent.
Beg. And there 's the Baron,
I spied him skulking in his peasant's dress.
Osw. How say you? in disguise? —
Mar. But what 's your business
With Herbert or his Daughter?
Beg. Daughter! truly! —
But how 's the day? — I fear, my little Boy,
We 've overslept ourselves. — Sirs, have you seen
him? [*Offers to go*
Mar. I must have more of this; — you shall not
stir
An inch, till I am answered. Know you aught
That doth concern this Herbert?
Beg. You are provoked,
And will misuse me, Sir!
Mar. No trifling, Woman! —
Osw. You are as safe as in a sanctuary;
Speak.

Mar. Speak!

Beg. He is a most hard-hearted man.

Mar. Your life is at my mercy.

Beg. Do not harm me,
And I will tell you all.—You know not, Sir,
What strong temptations press upon the Poor.

Osw. Speak out.

Beg. O Sir, I 've been a wicked Woman.

Osw. Nay, but speak out!

Beg. He flattered me, and said
What harvest it would bring us both; and so,
I parted with the Child.

Mar. Parted with whom?

Beg. Idonea, as he calls her; but the Girl
Is mine.

Mar. Yours, Woman! are you Herbert's wife?

Beg. Wife, Sir! his wife!—not I; my husband, Sir,
Was of Kirkoswald,—many a snowy winter
We 've weathered out together. My poor Gilfred!
He has been two years in his grave.

Mar. Enough.

Osw. We 've solved the riddle.—Miscreant!

Mar Do you,
Good Dame, repair to Liddesdale and wait
For my return; be sure you shall have justice.

Osw. A lucky woman!—go, you have done good service. [*Aside.*

Mar (*to himself.*) Eternal praises on the power that saved her!—

Osw. (*gives her money.*) Here's for your little
boy, — and when you christen him
I'll be his Godfather.
Beg. O Sir, you are merry with me.
In grange or farm this Hundred scarcely owns
A dog that does not know me. —These good Folks,
For love of God, I must not pass their doors;
But I'll be back with my best speed: for you,
God bless and thank you both, my gentle Masters.
[*Exit* Beggar
Mar. (*to himself.*) The cruel Viper! — Poor
devoted Maid,
Now I *do* love thee.
Osw. I am thunderstruck.
Mar. Where is she — holla!
[*Calling to the* Beggar, *who returns; he looks at her steadfastly.*
You are Idonea's Mother? —
Nay, be not terrified, — it does me good
To look upon you.
Osw. (*interrupting.*) In a peasant's dress
You saw, who was it?
Beg. Nay, I dare not speak;
He is a man, if it should come to his ears
I never shall be heard of more.
Osw. Lord Clifford?
Beg. What can I do? believe me, gentle Sirs,
I love her, though I dare not call her daughter.
Osw. Lord Clifford, — did you see him talk with
Herbert?

Beg. Yes, to my sorrow, — under the great oak
At Herbert's door. And when he stood beside
The blind Man — at the silent Girl he looked
With such a look — it makes me tremble, Sir,
To think of it.

Osw. Enough! you may depart;

Mar. (*to himself.*) Father! — to God himself we cannot give
A holier name; and, under such a mask,
To lead a Spirit, spotless as the blessed,
To that abhorrèd den of brutish vice! —
Oswald, the firm foundation of my life
Is going from under me; these strange discoveries —
Looked at from every point of fear or hope,
Duty or love — involve, I feel, my ruin.

ACT II.

SCENE, *A Chamber in the Hostel.* — OSWALD *alone, rising from the Table on which he had been writing.*

Osw. They chose *him* for their Chief! — what covert part
He, in the preference, modest Youth, might take,
I neither know nor care. The insult bred
More of contempt than hatred; both are flown
That either e'er existed is my shame:
'T was a dull spark, a most unnatural fire,

That died the moment the air breathed upon it.
— These fools of feeling are mere birds of winter
That haunt some barren island of the north,
Where, if a famishing man stretch forth his hand,
They think it is to feed them. I have left him
To solitary meditation ; — now
For a few swelling phrases, and a flash
Of truth, enough to dazzle and to blind,
And he is mine for ever. — Here he comes

Enter MARMADUKE.

Mar. These ten years she has moved her lips all day
And never speaks !
Osw. Who is it?
Mar. I have seen her.
Osw. Oh ! the poor tenant of that ragged homestead,
Her whom the monster, Clifford, drove to madness,
Mar. I met a peasant near the spot; he told me,
These ten years she had sat all day alone
Within those empty walls.
Osw. I too have seen her ;
Chancing to pass this way some six months gone,
At midnight, I betook me to the Churchyard :
The moon shone clear, the air was still, so still
The trees were silent as the graves beneath them.
Long did I watch, and saw her pacing round
Upon the selfsame spot, still round and round,
Her lips for ever moving.

Mar. At her door
Rooted I stood; for, looking at the woman,
I thought I saw the skeleton of Idonea.
Osw. But the pretended Father ——
Mar. Earthly law
Measures not crimes like his.
Osw. *We* rank not, happily,
With those who take the spirit of their rule
From that soft class of devotees who feel
Reverence for life so deeply, that they spare
The verminous brood, and cherish what they spare
While feeding on their bodies. Would that Idonea
Were present, to the end that we might hear
What she can urge in his defence; she loves him.
Mar. Yes, loves him; 't is a truth that multiplies
His guilt a thousand-fold.
Osw. 'T is most perplexing:
What must be done?
Mar. We will conduct her hither
These walls shall witness it, — from first to last
He shall reveal himself.
Osw. Happy are we,
Who live in these disputed tracts, that own
No law but what each man makes for himself;
Here justice has indeed a field of triumph.
Mar. Let us begone and bring her hither; — here
The truth shall be laid open, his guilt proved
Before her face. The rest be left to me.

Osw. You will be firm: but though we well may
trust
The issue to the justice of the cause,
Caution must not be flung aside; remember,
Yours is no common life. Self-stationed here,
Upon these savage confines, we have seen you
Stand like an isthmus 'twixt two stormy seas,
That oft have checked their fury at your bid
ding.
'Mid the deep holds of Solway's mossy waste,
Your single virtue has transformed a Band
Of fierce barbarians into ministers
Of peace and order. Aged men with tears
Have blessed their steps, the fatherless retire
For shelter to their banners. But it is,
As you must needs have deeply felt, it is
In darkness and in tempest that we seek
The majesty of Him who rules the world.
Benevolence, that has no heart to use
The wholesome ministry of pain and evil,
Becomes at last weak and contemptible.
Your generous qualities have won due praise,
But vigorous spirits look for something more
Than youth's spontaneous products; and to-day
You will not disappoint them; and hereafter ——.

Mar. You are wasting words; hear me then,
once for all:
You are a man, — and therefore, if compassion,
Which to our kind is natural as life,
Be known unto you, you will love this woman,

Even as I do; but I should loathe the light,
If I could think one weak or partial feeling ——
Osw. You will forgive me ——
Mar If I ever knew
My heart, could penetrate its inmost core,
'T is at this moment. — Oswald, I have loved
To be the friend and father of the oppressed,
A comforter of sorrow; — there is something
Which looks like a transition in my soul,
And yet it is not. — Let us lead him hither.
Osw. Stoop for a moment; 't is an act of justice;
And where 's the triumph, if the delegate
Must fall in the execution of his office?
The deed is done — if you will have it so —
Here where we stand, — that tribe of vulgar wretches
(You saw them gathering for the festival)
Rush in, — the villains seize us ——
Mar. Seize!
Osw. Yes, they —
Men who are little given to sift and weigh —
Would wreak on us the passion of the moment.
Mar. The cloud will soon disperse; — farewell! But stay,
Thou wilt relate the story.
Osw. Am I neither
To bear a part in this man's punishment,
Nor be its witness?
Mar. I had many hopes

That were most dear to me, and some will bear
To be transferred to thee.

Osw. When I 'm dishonored

Mar. I would preserve thee. How may this be done?

Osw. By showing that you look beyond the instant
A few leagues hence we shall have open ground,
And nowhere upon earth is place so fit
To look upon the deed. Before we enter
The barren Moor, hangs from a beetling rock
The shattered Castle in which Clifford oft
Has held infernal orgies, — with the gloom,
And very superstition of the place,
Seasoning his wickedness. The debauchee
Would there perhaps have gathered the first fruits
Of this mock father's guilt.

Enter Host *conducting* HERBERT.

Host. The Baron Herbert
Attends your pleasure.

Osw. (*to* Host). We are ready.
(*To* HERBERT.) Sir!
I hope you are refreshed. — I have just written
A notice to your daughter, that she may know
What is become of you. — You 'll sit down and sign it;
'T will glad her heart to see her father's signature
[*Gives the letter he had written*

Her. Thanks for your care.
[*Sits down and writes.* *Exit* Host

Osw. (*aside to* MARMADUKE.) Perhaps it would
be useful
That you too should subscribe your name.
[MARMADUKE *overlooks* HERBERT — *then writes*
— *examines the letter eagerly.*
Mar. I cannot leave this paper.
[*He puts it up, agitated.*
Osw. (*aside.*) Dastard! Come.
[MARMADUKE *goes towards* HERBERT *and supports him.* — MARMADUKE *tremblingly beckons* OSWALD *to take his place.*
Mar. (*as he quits* HERBERT.) There is a palsy in his limbs, — he shakes.
[*Exeunt* OSWALD *and* HERBERT, — MARMADUKE *following.*

SCENE *changes to a Wood.* — *A Group of* Pilgrims *and* IDONEA *with them.*

First Pil. A grove of darker and more lofty
shade
I never saw.
Sec. Pil. The music of the birds
Drops deadened from a roof so thick with leaves.
Old Pil. This news! it made my heart leap up
with joy.
Idon. I scarcely can believe it.
Old Pil. Myself, I heard
The Sheriff read, in open court, a letter
Which purported it was the royal pleasure

The Baron Herbert, who, as was supposed,
Had taken refuge in this neighborhood,
Should be forthwith restored. The hearing, Lady,
Filled my dim eyes with tears. — When I returned
From Palestine, and brought with me a heart,
Though rich in heavenly, poor in earthly comfort,
I met your father, then a wandering outcast:
He had a guide, a shepherd's boy; but grieved
He was that one so young should pass his youth
In such sad service; and he parted with him.
We joined our tales of wretchedness together,
And begged our daily bread from door to door.
I talk familiarly to you, sweet Lady!
For once you loved me.

Idon. You shall back with me
And see your friend again. The good old man
Will be rejoiced to greet you.

Old Pil. It seems but yesterday
That a fierce storm o'ertook us, worn with travel,
In a deep wood remote from any town.
A cave that opened to the road presented
A friendly shelter, and we entered in.

Idon. And I was with you?

Old Pil. If indeed 't was you; —
But you were then a tottering little-one. —
We sat us down. The sky grew dark and darker
I struck my flint, and built up a small fire
With rotten boughs and leaves, such as the winds
Of many autumns in the cave had piled.
Meanwhile the storm fell heavy on the woods;

Our little fire sent forth a cheering warmth,
And we were comforted, and talked of comfort;
But 't was an angry night, and o'er our heads
The thunder rolled in peals that would have made
A sleeping man uneasy in his bed.
O Lady, you have need to love your father.
His voice — methinks I hear it now, his voice
When, after a broad flash that filled the cave,
He said to me, that he had seen his child,
A face (no cherub's face more beautiful)
Revealed by lustre brought with it from heaven;
And it was you, dear Lady!

Idon. God be praised,
That I have been his comforter till now!
And will be so through every change of fortune
And every sacrifice his peace requires. —
Let us be gone with speed, that he may hear
These joyful tidings from no lips but mine.

[*Exeunt* IDONEA *and* Pilgrims.

SCENE, *the Area of a half-ruined Castle, — on one side the entrance to a Dungeon.* — OSWALD *and* MARMADUKE *pacing backwards and forwards.*

Mar. 'T is a wild night.

Osw. I 'd give my cloak and bonnet
For sight of a warm fire.

Mar. The wind blows keen;
My hands are numb.

Osw. Ha! ha! 't is nipping cold.
[*Blowing his fingers*
I long for news of our brave comrades; Lacy
Would drive those Scottish Rovers to their dens
If once they blew a horn this side the Tweed.
Mar. I think I see a second range of Tower
This castle has another Area, — come,
Let us examine it.
Osw. 'T is a bitter night;
I hope Idonea is well housed. That horseman,
Who at full speed swept by us where the wood
Roared in the tempest, was within an ace
Of sending to his grave our precious Charge:
That would have been a vile mischance.
Mar. It would
Osw. Justice had been most cruelly defrauded
Mar. Most cruelly.
Osw. As up the steep we clomb,
I saw a distant fire in the northeast;
I took it for the blaze of Cheviot Beacon:
With proper speed, our quarters may be gained
To-morrow evening.
[*Looks restlessly towards the mouth of the dungeon*
Mar. When, upon the plank,
I had led him 'cross the torrent, his voice blessed me:
You could not hear, for the foam beat the rocks
With deafening noise, — the benediction fell
Back on himself; but changed into a curse.
Osw. As well indeed it might.

Mar. And this you deem
The fittest place?
Osw. (*aside.*) He is growing pitiful.
Mar. (*listening.*) What an odd moaning that is! —
Osw. Mighty odd
The wind should pipe a little, while we stand
Cooling our heels in this way! — I'll begin
And count the stars.
Mar. (*still listening.*) That dog of his, you are sure,
Could not come after us, — he *must* have perished;
The torrent would have dashed an oak to splinters.
You said you did not like his looks, — that he
Would trouble us; if he were here again,
I swear the sight of him would quail me more
Than twenty armies.
Osw. How?
Mar. The old blind man,
When you had told him the mischance, was troubled
Even to the shedding of some natural tears
Into the torrent over which he hung,
Listening in vain.
Osw. He has a tender heart!
[OSWALD *offers to go down into the dungeon.*
Mar. How now, what mean you?
Osw. Truly, I was going
To waken our stray Baron. Were there not
A farm or dwelling-house within five leagues,
We should deserve to wear a cap and bells,
Three good round years, for playing the fool here
In such a night as this.

Mar. Stop, stop.

Osw. Perhaps
You 'd better like we should descend together,
And lie down by his side, — what say you to it?
Three of us, — we should keep each other warm
I 'll answer for it that our four-legged friend
Shall not disturb us; further I 'll not engage;
Come, come, for manhood's sake!

Mar. These drowsy shiverings,
This mortal stupor which is creeping over me,
What do they mean? Were this my single body
Opposed to armies, not a nerve would tremble:
Why do I tremble now? — Is not the depth
Of this man's crimes beyond the reach of thought?
And yet, in plumbing the abyss for judgment,
Something I strike upon which turns my mind
Back on herself, I think, again, — my breast
Concentres all the terrors of the Universe:
I look at him and tremble like a child.

Osw. Is it possible?

Mar. One thing you noticed not:
Just as we left the glen a clap of thunder
Burst on the mountains, with hell-rousing force.
This is a time, said he, when guilt may shudder;
But there 's a Providence for them who walk
In helplessness, when innocence is with them.
At this audacious blasphemy, I thought
The spirit of vengeance seemed to ride the air.

Osw. Why are you not the man you were that moment?

[*He draws* MARMADUKE *to the dungeon.*

Mar. You say he was asleep, — look at this arm,
And tell me if 't is fit for such a work.
Oswald, Oswald! [*Leans upon* OSWALD.
Osw. This is some sudden seizure!
Mar. A most strange faintness; — will you hunt me out
A draught of water?
Osw. Nay, to see you thus
Moves me beyond my bearing. — I will try
To gain the torrent's brink. [*Exit* OSWALD.
Mar. (*after a pause.*) It seems an age
Since that man left me. — No, I am not lost.
Her. (*at the mouth of the dungeon.*) Give me your hand; where are you, Friends? and tell me
How goes the night.
Mar. 'T is hard to measure time,
In such a weary night, and such a place.
Her. I do not hear the voice of my friend Oswald.
Mar. A minute past, he went to fetch a draught
Of water from the torrent. 'T is, you 'll say,
A cheerless beverage.
Her. How good it was in you
To stay behind! — Hearing at first no answer,
I was alarmed.
Mar. No wonder; this is a place
That well may put some fears into *your* heart.
Her. Why so? a roofless rock had been a comfort,
Storm-beaten and bewildered as we were

And in a night like this, to lend your cloaks
To make a bed for me! — My Girl will weep
When she is told of it.

Mar. This daughter of yours
Is very dear to you.

Her. Oh! but you are young;
Over your head twice twenty years must roll,
With all their natural weight of sorrow and pain,
Ere can be known to you how much a father
May love his child.

Mar. Thank you, old man, for this! [*Aside*

Her. Fallen am I, and worn out, a useless man;
Kindly have you protected me to-night,
And no return have I to make but prayers;
May you in age be blest with such a daughter! —
When from the Holy Land I had returned
Sightless, and from my heritage was driven,
A wretched outcast — But this strain of thought
Would lead me to talk fondly.

Mar. Do not fear;
Your words are precious to my ears; go on.

Her. You will forgive me, but my heart runs over.
When my old Leader slipped into the flood
And perished, what a piercing outcry you
Sent after him. I have loved you ever since.
You start, — where are we?

Mar. Oh, there is no danger
The cold blast struck me.

Her. 'T was a foolish question

Mar. But when you were an outcast? — Heaven
is just;
Your piety would not miss its due reward;
The little orphan then would be your succor,
And do good service, though she knew it not.
Her. I turned me from the dwellings of my
fathers,
Where none but those who trampled on my rights
Seemed to remember me. To the wide world
I bore her, in my arms; her looks won pity;
She was my raven in the wilderness,
And brought me food. Have I not cause to love
her?
Mar. Yes.
Her. More than ever parent loved a child!
Mar. Yes, yes.
Her. I will not murmur, merciful God!
I will not murmur; blasted as I have been,
Thou hast left me ears to hear my daughter's voice,
And arms to fold her to my heart. Submissively
Thee I adore, and find my rest in faith.

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Herbert! — confusion! (*aside.*) Here it
is, my Friend, [*Presents the Horn.*
A charming beverage for you to carouse,
This bitter night.
Her. Ha! Oswald! ten bright crosses
I would have given, not many minutes gone,
To have heard your voice.

Osw. Your couch, I fear, good Baron
Has been but comfortless ; and yet that place,
When the tempestuous wind first drove us hither
Felt warm as a wren's nest. You 'd better turn
And under covert rest till break of day,
Or till the storm abate.
(*To* MARMADUKE *aside.*) He has restored you.
No doubt you have been nobly entertained ?
But soft ! — How came he forth ? The Nightmare Conscience
Has driven him out of harbor ?
Mar. I believe
You have guessed right.
Her. The trees renew their murmur :
Come, let us house together.
[OSWALD *conducts him to the dungeon.*
Osw. (*returns.*) Had I not
Esteemed you worthy to conduct the affair
To its most fit conclusion, do you think
I would so long have struggled with my nature,
And smothered all that 's man in me ? — Away ! —
[*Looking towards the dungeon.*
This man 's the property of him who best
Can feel his crimes. I have resigned a privilege:
It now becomes my duty to resume it.
Mar. Touch not a finger ——
Osw. What then must be done ?
Mar. Which way soe'er I turn, I am perplexed.
Osw Now, on my life, I grieve for you. The misery

Of doubt is insupportable. Pity, the facts
Did not admit of stronger evidence;
Twelve honest men, plain men, would set us right;
Their verdict would abolish these weak scruples.

Mar. Weak! I am weak; — there does my torment lie,
Feeding itself.

Osw. Verily, when he said
How his old heart would leap to hear his steps,
You thought his voice the echo of Idonea's.

Mar. And never heard a sound so terrible.

Osw. Perchance you think so now?

Mar. I cannot do it
Twice did I spring to grasp his withered throat,
When such a sudden weakness fell upon me,
I could have dropped to sleep upon his breast.

Osw. Justice, — is there not thunder in the word?
Shall it be law to stab the petty robber
Who aims but at our purse; and shall this Parricide —
Worse is he far, far worse (if foul dishonor
Be worse than death) to that confiding creature
Whom he to more than filial love and duty
Hath falsely trained — shall he fulfil his purpose?
But you are fallen.

Mar. Fallen should I be indeed —
Murder — perhaps asleep, blind, old, alone,
Betrayed, in darkness! Here to strike the blow —
Away? away! —— [*Flings away his sword*

Osw. Nay, I have done with you:
We 'll lead him to the Convent. He shall live.
And she shall love him. With unquestioned title
He shall be seated in his Barony,
And we too chant the praise of his good deeds.
I now perceive we do mistake our masters,
And most despise the men who best can teach us
Henceforth it shall be said that bad men only
Are brave: Clifford is brave; and that old man
Is brave.

[*Taking* MARMADUKE'S *sword and giving it to him.*

To Clifford's arms he would have led
His victim, — haply to this desolate house.

Mar. (*advancing to the dungeon.*) It must be ended! —

Osw. Softly; do not rouse him;
He will deny it to the last. He lies
Within the vault, a spear's length to the left.

[MARMADUKE *descends to the dungeon.*

(*Alone.*) The villains rose in mutiny to destroy me;
I could have quelled the cowards, but this stripling
Must needs step in and save my life. The look
With which he gave the boon, — I see it now!
The same that tempted me to loathe the gift. —
For this old venerable Graybeard, — faith,
'T is his own fault if he hath got a face
Which doth play tricks with them that look on it
'T was this that put it in my thoughts, — that countenance, —

His staff, — his figure. — Murder! — what, of whom?
We kill a worn-out horse, and who but women
Sigh at the deed? Hew down a withered tree,
And none look grave but dotards. He may live
To thank me for this service. Rainbow arches,
Highways of dreaming passion, have too long,
Young as he is, diverted wish and hope
From the unpretending ground we mortals tread; —
Then shatter the delusion, break it up
And set him free. What follows? I have learned
That things will work to ends the slaves o' the world
Do never dream of. I *have* been what he —
This boy — when he comes forth with bloody hands —
Might envy, and am now — But he shall know
What I am now. [*Goes and listens at the dungeon.*
Praying or parleying? — Tut!
Is he not eyeless? He has been half dead
These fifteen years ——

Enter female Beggar *with two or three of her Companions.*

(*Turning abruptly.*) *Ha! speak!* — what thing art thou?
Recognizes her.) Heavens! my good Friend!
[*To her*
Beg. Forgive me, gracious Sir! —

Osw. (*to her companions.*) Begone, ye Slaves
or I will raise a whirlwind
And send ye dancing to the clouds, like leaves.
[*They retire affrighted.*

Beg. Indeed we meant no harm; we lodge sometimes
In this deserted Castle. — *I repent me.*

[OSWALD *goes to the dungeon, — listens, — returns to the* Beggar.

Osw. Woman, thou hast a helpless infant, — keep
Thy secret for its sake, or verily
That wretched life of thine shall be the forfeit.

Beg. I *do* repent me, Sir; I fear the curse
Of that blind man. 'T was not your money, Sir —

Osw. Begone!

Beg. (*going*). There is some wicked deed in hand: [*Aside*
Would I could find the old man and his daughter
[*Exit* Beggar

MARMADUKE *re-enters from the dungeon.*

Osw. It is all over then; — your foolish fears
Are hushed to sleep, by your own act and deed,
Made quiet as he is.

Mar. Why came you down?
And when I felt your hand upon my arm
And spake to you, why did you give no answer?
Feared you to waken him? He must have been
In a deep sleep. I whispered to him thrice

There are the stangest echoes in that place!

Osw. Tut! let them gabble till the day of doom.

Mar. Scarcely, by groping, had I reached the spot,
When round my wrist I felt a cord drawn tight,
As if the blind man's dog were pulling at it.

Osw. But after that?

Mar. The features of Idonea
Lurked in his face ——

Osw. Psha! Never to these eyes
Will retribution show itself again
With aspect so inviting. Why forbid me
To share your triumph?

Mar. Yes, her very look,
Smiling in sleep ——

Osw. A pretty feat of Fancy!

Mar. Though but a glimpse, it sent me to my prayers.

Osw. Is he alive?

Mar. What mean you? who alive?

Osw. Herbert! since you will have it, Baron Herbert;
He who will gain his Seignory when Idonea
Hath become Clifford's harlot, — is *he* living?

Mar. The old man in that dungeon *is* alive.

Osw. Henceforth, then, will I never in camp or field
Obey you more. Your weakness to the Band
Shall be proclaimed: brave men, they all shall hear it.

You a protector of humanity!
Avenger you of outraged innocence!
Mar. 'T was dark, — dark as the grave; yet did I see,
Saw him, — his face turned toward me; and I tell thee
Idonea's filial countenance was there
To baffle me, — it put me to my prayers.
Upwards I cast my eyes, and, through a crevice,
Beheld a star twinkling above my head,
And, by the living God, I could not do it.
[*Sinks exhausted.*
Osw. (*to himself.*) Now may I perish if this turn do more
Than make me change my course.
(*To* MARMADUKE.) Dear Marmaduke,
My words were rashly spoken; I recall them:
I feel my error; shedding human blood
Is a most serious thing.
Mar. Not I alone,
Thou too art deep in guilt.
Osw. We have indeed
Been most presumptuous. There *is* guilt in this,
Else could so strong a mind have ever known
These trepidations? Plain it is that Heaven
Has marked out this foul wretch as one whose crimes
Must never come before a mortal judgment-seat,
Or be chastised by mortal instruments.

Mar. A thought that 's worth a thousand worlds!
[*Goes towards the dungeon.*
Osw. I grieve
That, in my zeal, I have caused you so much pain.
Mar. Think not of that! 't is over, — we are safe.
Osw. (*as if to himself, yet speaking aloud.*) The truth is hideous, but how stifle it?
[*Turning to* MARMADUKE.
Give me your sword; — nay, here are stones and fragments,
The least of which would beat out a man's brains;
Or you might drive your head against that wall.
No! this is not the place to hear the tale:
It should be told you pinioned in your bed,
Or on some vast and solitary plain
Blown to you from a trumpet.
Mar. Why talk thus?
Whate'er the monster brooding in your breast,
I care not: fear I have none, and cannot fear ——
[*The sound of a horn is heard.*
That horn again. 'T is some one of our Troop;
What do they here? Listen!
Osw. What! dogged like thieves

Enter WALLACE *and* LACY, &c.

Lacy. You are found at last, thanks to the vagrant troop
For not misleading us.
Osw. (*looking at* WALLACE.) That subtle gray beard, —
I 'd rather see my father's ghost.

Lacy. (*to* MARMADUKE.) My Captain,
We come by order of the Band. Belike
You have not heard that Henry has at last
Dissolved the Barons' League, and sent abroad
His Sheriffs with fit force to reinstate
The genuine owners of such Lands and Baronies
As, in these long commotions, have been seized.
His power is this way tending. It befits us
To stand upon our guard, and with our swords
Defend the innocent.

Mar. Lacy! we look
But at the surfaces of things; we hear
Of towns in flames, fields ravaged, young and old
Driven out in troops to want and nakedness;
Then grasp our swords and rush upon a cure
That flatters us, because it asks not thought:
The deeper malady is better hid;
The world is poisoned at the heart.

Lacy. What mean you?

Wal. (*whose eye has been fixed suspiciously upon* OSWALD.) Ay, what is it you mean?

Mar. Harkee, my Friends; — [*Appearing gay*
Were there a man who, being weak and helpless
And most forlorn, should bribe a mother, pressed
By penury, to yield him up her daughter,
A little infant, and instruct the babe,
Prattling upon his knee, to call him Father ——

Lacy. Why, if his heart be tender, that offence
I could forgive him.

Mar. (*going on.*) And should he make the child
An instrument of falsehood, should he teach her
To stretch her arms, and dim the gladsome light
Of infant playfulness with piteous looks
Of misery that was not ——
Lacy. Troth, 't is hard, —
But in a world like ours ——
Mar. (*changing his tone.*) This selfsame man, —
Even while he printed kisses on the cheek
Of this poor babe, and taught its innocent tongue
To lisp the name of Father, — could he look
To the unnatural harvest of that time
When he should give her up, a woman grown,
To him who bid the highest in the market
Of foul pollution ——
Lacy. The whole visible world
Contains not such a monster!
Mar. For this purpose
Should he resolve to taint her soul by means
Which bathe the limbs in sweat to think of them;
Should he, by tales which would draw tears from iron,
Work on her nature, and so turn compassion
And gratitude to ministers of vice,
And make the spotless spirit of filial love
Prime mover in a plot to damn his victim
Both soul and body ——
Wal. 'Tis too horrible;
Oswald, what say you to it?

Lacy. Hew him down,
And fling him to the ravens.
Mar. But his aspect
It is so meek, his countenance so venerable.
Wal. (*with an appearance of mistrust.*) But how
what say you, Oswald?
Lacy. (*at the same moment.*) Stab him, were it
Before the Altar.
Mar. What, if he were sick,
Tottering upon the very verge of life,
And old, and blind ——
Lacy. Blind, say you?
Osw. (*coming forward.*) Are we men,
Or own we baby spirits? Genuine courage
Is not an accidental quality,
A thing dependent for its casual birth
On opposition and impediment.
Wisdom, if Justice speak the word, beats down
The giant's strength; and, at the voice of Justice,
Spares not the worm. The giant and the worm, —
She weighs them in one scale. The wiles of woman,
And craft of age, seducing reason, first
Made weakness a protection, and obscured
The moral shapes of things. His tender cries
And helpless innocence, — do they protect
The infant lamb? and shall the infirmities,
Which have enabled this enormous culprit
To perpetrate his crimes, serve as a sanctuary
To cover him from punishment? Shame! — Justice
Admitting no resistance, bends alike

The feeble and the strong. She needs not here
Her bonds and chains, which make the mighty feeble.
— We recognize in this old man a victim
Prepared already for the sacrifice.

Lacy. By heaven, his words are reason!

Osw. Yes, my Friends,
His countenance is meek and venerable;
And, by the Mass, to see him at his prayers! —
I am of flesh and blood, and may I perish
When my heart does not ache to think of it! —
Poor victim! not a virtue under heaven
But what was made an engine to ensnare thee;
But yet I trust, Idonea, thou art safe.

Lacy. Idonea!

Wal. How! what? your Idonea?
[*To* MARMADUKE.

Mar. *Mine;*
But now no longer mine. You know Lord Clifford;
He is the man to whom the maiden — pure
As beautiful, and gentle and benign,
And in her ample heart loving even me —
Was to be yielded up.

Lacy. Now, by the head
Of my own child, this man must die; my hand,
A worthier wanting, shall itself entwine
In his gray hairs!

Mar. (*to* LACY.) I love the father in thee.
You know me, Friends; I have a heart to feel,
And I have felt, more than perhaps becomes me
Or duty sanctions.

Lacy. We will have ample justice
Who are we, Friends? Do we not live on ground
Where souls are self-defended, free to grow
Like mountain oaks rocked by the stormy wind.
Mark the Almighty Wisdom, which decreed
This monstrous crime to be laid open — *here*,
Where Reason has an eye that she can use,
And men alone are umpires. To the Camp
He shall be led, and there, the Country round
All gathered to the spot, in open day
Shall Nature be avenged.

Osw. 'T is nobly thought;
His death will be a monument for ages.

Mar. (*to* LACY.) I thank you for that hint. He shall be brought
Before the Camp, and would that best and wisest
Of every country might be present. There,
His crime shall be proclaimed; and for the rest,
It shall be done as Wisdom shall decide:
Meanwhile, do you two hasten back and see
That all is well prepared.

Wal. We will obey you.
(*Aside.*) But softly! we must look a little nearer

Mar. Tell where you found us. At some future time
I will explain the cause. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE, *the door of the Hostel, a group of* Pilgrims *as before;* IDONEA *and the* Host *among them.*

Host. Lady, you 'll find your father at the Convent
As I have told you. He left us yesterday
With two companions; one of them, as seemed,
His most familiar friend. (*Going.*) There was a letter
Of which I heard them speak, but that I fancy
Has been forgotten.

Idon. (*to* Host.) Farewell!

Host. Gentle pilgrims,
St. Cuthbert speed you on your holy errand.

[*Exeunt* IDONEA *and* Pilgrims.

SCENE, *a desolate Moor.*

OSWALD (*alone*).

Osw. Carry him to the Camp! Yes, to the Camp.
O Wisdom! a most wise resolve! and then,
That half a word should blow it to the winds!
This last device must end my work. — Methinks
It were a pleasant pastime to construct
A scale and table of belief, — as thus, —
Two columns, one for passion, one for proof;
Each rises as the other falls: and first,
Passion a unit and *against* us, — proof, —

Nay, we must travel in another path,
Or we 're stuck fast for ever; — passion, then,
Shall be a unit *for* us; proof, — no, passion!
We 'll not insult thy majesty by time,
Person, and place, — the where, the when, the how
And all particulars that dull brains require
To constitute the spiritless shape of Fact,
They bow to, calling the idol, Demonstration.
A whipping to the Moralists who preach
That misery is a sacred thing: for me,
I know no cheaper engine to degrade a man,
Nor any half so sure. This stripling's mind
Is shaken till the dregs float on the surface;
And, in the storm and anguish of the heart,
He talks of a transition in his soul,
And dreams that he is happy. We dissect
The senseless body, and why not the mind? —
These are strange sights, — the mind of man, upturned,
Is in all natures a strange spectacle;
In some a hideous one — hem! shall I stop?
No. — Thoughts and feelings will sink deep, but then
They have no substance. Pass but a few minutes,
And something shall be done which Memory
May touch, whene'er her vassals are at work.

Enter MARMADUKE, *from behind.*

Osw. (*turning to meet him.*) But listen, for my peace ——

Mar. Why, I *believe* you.
Osw. But hear the proofs ——
Mar. Ay, prove that, when two peas
Lie snugly in a pod, the pod must then
Be larger than the peas, — prove this, — 't were matter
Worthy the hearing. Fool was I to dream
It ever could be otherwise!
Osw. Last night
When I returned with water from the brook,
I overheard the villains, — every word
Like red-hot iron burnt into my heart.
Said one, "It is agreed on. The blind man
Shall feign a sudden illness, and the girl,
Who on her journey must proceed alone,
Under pretence of violence, be seized.
She is," continued the detested slave,
"She is right willing, — strange if she were not! —
They say, Lord Clifford is a savage man;
But, faith, to see him in his silken tunic,
Fitting his low voice to the minstrel's harp,
There 's witchery in 't. I never knew a maid
That could withstand it. True," continued he,
"When we arranged the affair, she wept a little.
(Not the less welcome to my Lord for that.)
And said, 'My father, he will have it so.'"
Mar. I am your hearer.
Osw. This I caught, and more
That may not be retold to any ear.
The obstinate bolt of a small iron door

Detained them near the gateway of the Castle.
By a dim lantern's light I saw that wreaths
Of flowers were in their hands, as if designed
For festive decoration; and they said,
With brutal laughter and most foul allusion,
That they should share the banquet with their lord
And his new favorite.

Mar. Misery! —

Osw. I knew
How you would be disturbed by this dire news,
And therefore chose this solitary Moor,
Here to impart the tale, of which, last night,
I strove to ease my mind, when our two comrades,
Commissioned by the Band, burst in upon us.

Mar. Last night, when moved to lift the avenging steel,
I did believe all things were shadows, — yea,
Living or dead, all things were bodiless,
Or but the mutual mockeries of body,
Till that same star summoned me back again.
Now I could laugh till my ribs ached. O fool.
To let a creed, built in the heart of things,
Dissolve before a twinkling atom! — Oswald,
I could fetch lessons out of wiser schools
Than you have entered, were it worth the pains.
Young as I am, I might go forth a teacher,
And you should see how deeply I could reason
Of love in all its shapes, beginnings, ends;

Of moral qualities in their diverse aspects;
Of actions, and their laws and tendencies.
Osw. You take it as it merits ——
Mar. One a King,
General or Cham, Sultan or Emperor,
Strews twenty acres of good meadow-ground
With carcasses, in lineament and shape
And substance nothing differing from his own,
But that they cannot stand up of themselves;
Another sits i' th' sun, and by the hour
Floats kingcups in the brook; — a Hero one
We call, and scorn the other as Time's spendthrift;
But have they not a world of common ground
To occupy, — both fools, or wise alike,
Each in his way?
Osw. Troth, I begin to think so.
Mar. Now for the corner-stone of my philosophy:
I would not give a denier for the man
Who, on such provocation as this earth
Yields, could not chuck his babe beneath the chin,
And send it with a fillip to its grave.
Osw. Nay, you leave me behind.
Mar. That such a one,
So pious in demeanor! in his look
So saintly and so pure! —— Hark'ee, my Friend,
I 'll plant myself before Lord Clifford's Castle,
A surly mastiff kennels at the gate,
And he shall howl and I will laugh, a medley
Most tunable.

Osw. In faith, a pleasant scheme;
But take your sword along with you, for that
Might in such neighborhood find seemly use. —
But first, how wash our hands of this old man?

Mar. O yes, that mole, that viper in the path;
Plague on my memory, him had I forgotten.

Osw You know we left him sitting, — see him yonder.

Mar. Ha! ha! —

Osw. As 't will be but a moment's work,
I will stroll on; you follow when 't is done

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to another part of the Moor at a short distance.* — HERBERT *is discovered seated on a stone.*

Her. A sound of laughter, too! — 't is well. —
I feared
The stranger had some pitiable sorrow
Pressing upon his solitary heart.
Hush! — 't is the feeble and earth-loving wind
That creeps along the bells of the crisp heather.
Alas! 't is cold, — I shiver in the sunshine; —
What can this mean? There is a psalm that speaks
Of God's parental mercies, — with Idonea
I used to sing it. — Listen! — what foot is there?

Enter MARMADUKE.

Mar. (*aside, looking at* HERBERT.) And I have loved this man! and *she* hath loved him!
And I loved her, and she loves the Lord Clifford!
And there it ends; — if this be not enough
To make mankind merry for evermore,
Then plain it is as day, that eyes were made
For a wise purpose, — verily to weep with!
[*Looking round.*
A pretty prospect this, a masterpiece
Of Nature, finished with most curious skill!
(*To* HERBERT.) Good Baron, have you ever practised tillage?
Pray tell me what this land is worth by the acre?

Her. How glad I am to hear your voice! I know not
Wherein I have offended you; — last night
I found in you the kindest of protectors;
This morning, when I spoke of weariness,
You from my shoulder took my scrip and threw it
About your own; but for these two hours past
Once only have you spoken, when the lark
Whirred from among the fern beneath our feet,
And I, no coward in my better days,
Was almost terrified.

Mar. That's excellent! —
So, you bethought you of the many ways
In which a man may come to his end, whose crimes
Have roused all nature up against him — pshaw! —

Her. For mercy's sake, is nobody in sight?
No traveller, peasant, herdsman?

Mar. Not a soul:
Here is a tree, ragged, and bent, and bare,
That turns its goat's-beard flakes of pea-green moss
From the stern breathing of the rough sea-wind;
This have we, but no other company:
Commend me to the place. If a man should die
And leave his body here, it were all one
As he were twenty fathoms underground.

Her. Where is our common friend?

Mar. A ghost, methinks, —
The spirit of a murdered man, for instance, —
Might have fine room to ramble about here,
A grand domain to squeak and gibber in.

Her. Lost Man! if thou have any close-pent guilt
Pressing upon thy heart, and this the hour
Of visitation ——

Mar. A bold word from *you!*

Her. Restore him, Heaven!

Mar. The desperate wretch! — A Flower
Fairest of all flowers, was she once, but now
They have snapped her from the stem — Poh! let her lie
Besoiled with mire, and let the houseless snail
Feed on her leaves. You knew her well, — ay there,
Old Man! you were a very lynx, — you knew
The worm was in her ——

Her. Mercy! Sir, what mean you

Mar. You have a daughter!

Her. O that she were here!—
She hath an eye that sinks into all hearts,
And if I have in aught offended you,
Soon would her gentle voice make peace between us.
Mar. (*aside.*) I do believe he weeps — I could weep too —
There is a vein of her voice that runs through his:
Even such a man my fancy bodied forth
From the first moment that I loved the maid;
And for his sake I loved her more: these tears —
I did not think that aught was left in me
Of what I have been — yes, I thank thee, Heaven!
One happy thought has passed across my mind.
— It may not be — I am cut off from man;
No more shall I be man, — no more shall I
Have human feelings! — (*To* HERBERT.) — Now, for a little more
About your daughter!
Her. Troops of armed men,
Met in the roads, would bless us; little children,
Rushing along in the full tide of play,
Stood silent as we passed them! I have heard
The boisterous carman, in the miry road,
Check his loud whip, and hail us with mild voice,
And speak with milder voice to his poor beasts.
Mar. And whither were you going?
Her. Learn, young Man,
To fear the virtuous, and reverence misery,
Whether too much for patience, or, like mine,
Softened till it becomes a gift of mercy.

Mar. Now, this is as it should be!
Her. I am weak! —
My daughter does not know how weak I am;
And, as thou seest, under the arch of heaven
Here do I stand, alone, to helplessness,
By the good God, our common Father, doomed! —
But I had once a spirit and an arm ——
Mar. Now, for a word about your Barony:
I fancy when you left the Holy Land,
And came to — what 's your title — eh? your claims
Were undisputed!
Her. Like a mendicant,
Whom no one comes to meet, I stood alone; —
I murmured, — but, remembering Him who feeds
The pelican and ostrich of the desert,
From my own threshold I looked up to Heaven
And did not want glimmerings of quiet hope.
So, from the court I passed, and down the brook,
Led by its murmur, to the ancient oak
I came; and when I felt its cooling shade,
I sat me down, and cannot but believe —
While in my lap I held my little babe
And clasped her to my heart, my heart that ached
More with delight than grief — I heard a voice
Such as by Cherith on Elijah called;
It said, "I will be with thee." A little boy,
A shepherd-lad, ere yet my trance was gone,
Hailed us as if he had been sent from heaven,
And said, with tears, that he would be our guide

I had a better guide, — that innocent babe, —
Her, who hath saved me, to this hour, from harm,
From cold, from hunger, penury, and death;
To whom I owe the best of all the good
I have, or wish for, upon earth, — and more
And higher far than lies within earth's bounds:
Therefore I bless her: when I think of Man,
I bless her with sad spirit, — when of God,
I bless her in the fulness of my joy!

Mar. The name of daughter in his mouth, he prays!
With nerves so steady, that the very flies
Sit unmolested on his staff. — Innocent! —
If he were innocent — then he would tremble
And be disturbed, as I am. (*Turning aside.*) I have read
In story, what men now alive have witnessed,
How, when the people's mind was racked with doubt,
Appeal was made to the great Judge: the accused
With naked feet walked over burning ploughshares.
Here is a man by Nature's hand prepared
For a like trial, but more merciful.
Why else have I been led to this bleak waste?
Bare is it, without house or track, and destitute
Of obvious shelter, as a shipless sea.
Here will I leave him — here. — All-seeing God!
Such as *he* is, and sore perplexed as I am,
I will commit him to this final *ordeal!* —
He heard a voice, — a shepherd-lad came to him

And was his guide; if once, why not again,
And in this desert? If never, then the whole
Of what he says, and looks, and does, and is,
Makes up one damning falsehood. Leave him here
To cold and hunger! — Pain is of the heart,
And what are a few throes of bodily suffering
If they can waken one pang of remorse?
[*Goes up to* HERBERT.
Old Man! my wrath is as a flame burnt out,
It cannot be rekindled. Thou art here
Led by my hand to save thee from perdition;
Thou wilt have time to breathe and think ——
Her. O, mercy!
Mar. I know the need that all men have of mercy,
And therefore leave thee to a righteous judgment.
Her. My Child, my blessed Child!
Mar. No more of that;
Thou wilt have many guides if thou art innocent
Yea, from the utmost corners of the earth,
That woman will come o'er this waste to save thee.
[*He pauses and looks at* HERBERT'S *staff.*
Ha! what is here? and carved by her own hand
[*Reads upon the staff*
"I am eyes to the blind, saith the Lord.
He that puts his trust in me shall not fail!"
Yes, be it so; — repent and be forgiven; —
God and that staff are now thy only guides.
[*He leaves* HERBERT *on the Moor*

SCENE, *an eminence, a Beacon on the summit.*

LACY, WALLACE, LENNOX, &c., &c.

Several of the Band (*confusedly*). But patience!
One of the Band. Curses on that traitor,
Oswald! —
Our Captain made a prey to foul device! —
Len. (*to* WALLACE.) His tool, the wandering
beggar, made last night
A plain confession, such as leaves no doubt,
Knowing what otherwise we know too well,
That she revealed the truth. Stand by me now;
For rather would I have a nest of vipers
Between my breastplate and my skin, than make
Oswald my special enemy, if you
Deny me your support.
Lacy. We have been fooled, —
But for the motive?
Wal. Natures such as his
Spin motives out of their own bowels, Lacy!
I learn'd this when I was a Confessor.
I know him well; there needs no other motive
Than that most strange incontinence in crime
Which haunts this Oswald. Power is life to him
And breath and being; where he cannot govern,
He will destroy.
Lacy. To have been trapped like moles! —
Yes, you are right, we need not hunt for motives:
There is no crime from which this man would
shrink;

He recks not human law; and I have noticed
That often, when the name of God is uttered,
A sudden blankness overspreads his face.

Len. Yet, reasoner as he is, his pride has built
Some uncouth superstition of its own.

Wal. I have seen traces of it.

Len. Once he headed
A band of Pirates in the Norway seas;
And when the King of Denmark summoned him
To the oath of fealty, I well remember,
'T was a strange answer that he made; he said,
"I hold of Spirits, and the Sun in heaven."

Lacy. He is no madman.

Wal. A most subtle doctor
Were that man, who could draw the line that parts
Pride and her daughter, Cruelty, from Madness,
That should be scourged, not pitied. Restless minds,
Such minds as find amid their fellow-men
No heart that loves them, none that they can love,
Will turn perforce and seek for sympathy
In dim relation to imagined beings.

One of the Band. What if he mean to offer up our Captain
An expiation and a sacrifice
To those infernal fiends!

Wal. Now, if the event
Should be as Lennox has foretold, then swear,
My Friends, his heart shall have as many wounds
As there are daggers here.

Lacy. What need of swearing
One of the Band. Let us away!
Another. Away!
A third. Hark! how the horns
Of those Scotch Rovers echo through the vale.
Lacy. Stay you behind; and when the sun is down,
Light up this beacon.
One of the Band. You shall be obeyed.
[*They go out together.*

SCENE, *the Wood on the edge of the Moor.*

MARMADUKE (*alone*).

Mar. Deep, deep and vast, vast beyond human thought,
Yet calm. — I could believe, that there was here
The only quiet heart on earth. In terror,
Remembered terror, there is peace and rest.

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Ha! my dear Captain.
Mar. A later meeting, Oswald,
Would have been better timed.
Osw. Alone, I see;
You have done your duty. I had hopes, which now
I feel that you will justify.
Mar. I had fears,
From which I have freed myself.— But 't is my wish
To be alone, and therefore we must part.

Osw. Nay, then — I am mistaken. There's a weakness
About you still; you talk of solitude —
I am your friend.
Mar. What need of this assurance
At any time? and why given now?
Osw. Because
You are now in truth my master; you have taught me
What there is not another living man
Had strength to teach; — and therefore gratitude
Is bold, and would relieve itself by praise.
Mar. Wherefore press this on me?
Osw. Because I feel
That you have shown, and by a signal instance,
How they who would be just must seek the rule
By diving for it into their own bosoms.
To-day you have thrown off a tyranny
That lives but in the torpid acquiescence
Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of the world's masters, with the musty rules
By which they uphold their craft from age to age:
You have obeyed the only law that sense
Submits to recognize; the immediate law,
From the clear light of circumstances, flashed
Upon an independent intellect.
Henceforth new prospects open on your path;
Your faculties should grow with the demand;
I still will be your friend, will cleave to you

Through good and evil, obloquy and scorn,
Oft as they dare to follow on your steps.
Mar. I would be left alone.
Osw. (*exultingly.*) I know your motives!
I am not of the world's presumptuous judges,
Who damn where they can neither see nor feel,
With a hard-hearted ignorance; your struggles
I witness'd, and now hail your victory.
Mar. Spare me awhile that greeting.
Osw. It may be,
That some there are, squeamish, half-thinking cowards,
Who will turn pale upon you, call you murderer,
And you will walk in solitude among them.
A mighty evil for a strong-built mind!
Join twenty tapers of unequal height
And light them joined, and you will see the less
How 't will burn down the taller; and they all
Shall prey upon the tallest. Solitude! —
The eagle lives in solitude!
Mar. Even so,
The sparrow so on the house-top, and I,
The weakest of God's creatures, stand resolved
To abide the issue of my act, alone.
Osw. *Now* would you? and for ever? — My young Friend,
As time advances, either we become
The prey or masters of our own past deeds.
Fellowship we *must* have, willing or no;
And if good Angels fail, slack in their duty,

Substitutes, turn our faces where we may,
Are still forthcoming; some which, though they
bear
Ill names, can render no ill services,
In recompense for what themselves required.
So meet extremes in this mysterious world,
And opposites thus melt into each other.
Mar. Time, since Man first drew breath, has
never moved
With such a weight upon his wings as now;
But they will soon be lightened.
Osw. Ay, look up —
Cast round you your mind's eye, and you will learn
Fortitude is the child of Enterprise:
Great actions move our admiration, chiefly
Because they carry in themselves an earnest
That we can suffer greatly.
Mar. Very true.
Osw. Action is transitory — a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle — this way or that —
'T is done, and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And shares the nature of infinity.
Mar. Truth, — and I feel it.
Osw. What! if you had bid
Eternal farewell to unmingled joy
And the light dancing of the thoughtless heart;
It is the toy of fools, and little fit
For such a world as this. The wise abjure

All thoughts whose idle composition lives
In the entire forgetfulness of pain.
— I see I have disturbed you.
Mar. By no means.
Osw. Compassion! — pity! — pride can do without them;
And what if you should never know them more! —
He is a puny soul who, feeling pain,
Finds ease because another feels it too.
If e'er I open out this heart of mine
It shall be for a nobler end, — to teach
And not to purchase puling sympathy.
— Nay, you are pale.
Mar. It may be so.
Osw. Remorse, —
It cannot live with thought; think on, think on
And it will die. What! in this universe,
Where the least things control the greatest, where
The faintest breath that breathes can move a world;
What! feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed,
A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been
Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.
Mar. Now, whither are you wandering? That a man
So used to suit his language to the time,
Should thus so widely differ from himself, —
It is most strange.
Osw. Murder! — what's in the word! —
I have no cases by me ready made
To fit all deeds. Carry him to the Camp! —

A shallow project; — you of late have seen
More deeply, taught us that the institutes
Of Nature, by a cunning usurpation
Banished from human intercourse, exist
Only in our relations to the brutes
That make the fields their dwelling. If a snake
Crawl from beneath our feet, we do not ask
A license to destroy him: our good governors
Hedge in the life of every pest and plague
That bears the shape of man; and for what purpose,
But to protect themselves from extirpation?
This flimsy barrier you have overleaped.

Mar. My office is fulfilled, — the man is now
Delivered to the Judge of all things.

Osw. Dead!

Mar. I have borne my burden to its destined end.

Osw. This instant we 'll return to our Companions; —
O how I long to see their faces again!

Enter IDONEA *with* Pilgrims *who continue their journey.*

Idon. (*after some time.*) What, Marmaduke! now thou art mine for ever.
And Oswald, too! (*To* MARMADUKE.) On will we to my father
With the glad tidings which this day hath brought
We 'll go together, and, such proof received

Of his own rights restored, his gratitude
To God above will make him feel for ours.
Osw. I interrupt you?
Idon. Think not so.
Mar Idonea.
That I should ever live to see this moment!
Idon. Forgive me. — Oswald knows it all, — he knows,
Each word of that unhappy letter fell
As a blood-drop from my heart.
Osw. 'T was even so.
Mar. I have much to say, but for whose ear? — not thine.
Idon. Ill can I bear that look. — Plead for me, Oswald!
You are my father's friend.
(*To* MARMADUKE.) Alas! you know not,
And never *can* you know, how much he loved me.
Twice had he been to me a father, twice
Had given me breath, and was not I to be
His daughter, once his daughter? could I withstand
His pleading face, and feel his clasping arms,
And hear his prayer that I would not forsake him
In his old age —— [*Hides her face.*
Mar. Patience! — Heaven grant me patience!
She weeps, she weeps! — *my* brain shall burn for hours
Ere *I* can shed a tear.
Idon. I was a woman;
And, balancing the hopes that are the dearest

To womankind with duty to my father,
I yielded up those precious hopes, which naught
On earth could else have wrested from me; — if erring,
O, let me be forgiven!

Mar. I *do* forgive thee.

Idon. But take me to your arms; — this breast, alas!
It throbs, and you have a heart that does not feel it.

Mar. (*exultingly.*) She is innocent.
[*He embraces her.*

Osw. (*aside.*) Were I a moralist,
I should make wondrous revolution here;
It were a quaint experiment to show
The beauty of truth — [*Addressing them.*
I see I interrupt you;
I shall have business with you, Marmaduke;
Follow me to the Hostel. [*Exit* OSWALD.

Idon. Marmaduke,
This is a happy day. My father soon
Shall sun himself before his native doors;
The lame, the hungry, will be welcome there.
No more shall he complain of wasted strength,
Of thoughts that fail, and a decaying heart;
His good works will be balm and life to him.

Mar. This is most strange! — I know not what it was,
But there was something which most plainly said
That thou wert innocent.

Idon. How innocent! —
O heavens! you 've been deceived.
Mar. Thou art a woman,
To bring perdition on the universe.
Idon. Already I 've been punished to the height
Of my offence. [*Smiling affectionately.*
I see you love me still,
The labors of my hand are still your joy;
Bethink you of the hour when on your shoulder
I hung this belt.
[*Pointing to the belt on which was suspended* HERBERT'S *scrip.*
Mar. Mercy of Heaven! [*Sinks.*
Idon. What ails you! [*Distractedly.*
Mar. The scrip that held his food, and I forgot
To give it back again!
Idon. What mean your words?
Mar. I know not what I said, — all may be well.
Idon. That smile had life in it!
Mar. This road is perilous:
I will attend you to a hut that stands
Near the wood's edge: rest there to-night, I pray you:
For me, I have business, as you heard, with Oswald,
But will return to you by break of day. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE, *A desolate prospect — a ridge of rocks — a Chapel on the summit of one. — Moon behind the rocks — night stormy — irregular sound of a bell.* — HERBERT *enters exhausted.*

Her. That Chapel-bell in mercy seemed to guide me,
But now it mocks my steps; its fitful stroke
Can scarcely be the work of human hands.
Hear me, ye men, upon the cliffs, if such
There be who pray nightly before the Altar.
O that I had but strength to reach the place!
My Child — my Child — dark — dark — I faint — this wind —
These stifling blasts — God help me!

Enter ELDRED.

Eld. Better this bare rock,
Though it were tottering over a man's head,
Than a tight case of dungeon walls for shelter
From such rough dealing.
[*A moaning voice is heard.*
Ha! what sound is that?
Trees creaking in the wind (but none are here)
Send forth such noises — and that weary bell!
Surely some evil Spirit abroad to-night
Is ringing it — 't would stop a Saint in prayer,

And that — what is it? never was a sound so like
A human groan. Ha! what is here? Poor man!
Murdered! alas! speak, — speak, I am your friend:
No answer — hush — lost wretch, he lifts his hand
And lays it to his heart. (*Kneels to him.*) I pray you speak!
What has befallen you?

Her. (*feebly.*) A stranger has done this,
And in the arms of a stranger I must die.

Eld. Nay, think not so: come, let me raise you up. [*Raises him.*
This is a dismal place — well — that is well —
I was too fearful — take me for your guide
And your support — my hut is not far off.
[*Draws him gently off the stage.*

SCENE, *a room in the Hostel.* — MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD.

Mar. But for Idonea! — I have cause to think
That she is innocent.

Osw. Leave that thought awhile.
As one of those beliefs which in their hearts
Lovers lock up as pearls, though oft no better
Than feathers clinging to their points of passion.
This day's event has laid on me the duty
Of opening out my story; you must hear it,
And without further preface. — In my youth,
Except for that abatement which is paid

By envy as a tribute to desert,
I was the pleasure of all hearts, the darling
Of every tongue, — as you are now. You 've heard
That I embarked for Syria. On our voyage
Was hatched among the crew a foul conspiracy
Against my honor, in the which our Captain
Was, I believed, prime agent. The wind fell;
We lay becalmed week after week, until
The water of the vessel was exhausted;
I felt a double fever in my veins,
Yet rage suppressed itself; — to a deep stillness
Did my pride tame my pride; — for many days,
On a dead sea under a burning sky,
I brooded o'er my injuries, deserted
By man and nature; — if a breeze had blown,
It might have found its way into my heart,
And I had been — no matter — do you mark me
Mar. Quick — to the point — if any untold crime
Doth haunt your memory.
Osw. Patience, hear me further
One day in silence did we drift at noon
By a bare rock, narrow, and white, and bare;
No food was there, no drink, no grass, no shade,
No tree, nor jutting eminence, nor form
Inanimate large as the body of man,
Nor any living thing whose lot of life
Might stretch beyond the measure of one moon.
To dig for water on the spot, the Captain
Landed with a small troop, myself being one:
There I reproached him with his treachery.

Imperious at all times, his temper rose;
He struck me; and that instant had I killed him,
And put an end to his insolence, but my Comrades
Rushed in between us: then I did insist
(All hated him, and I was stung to madness)
That we should leave him there, alive! — we did so.

Mar. And he was famished?

Osw. Naked was the spot;
Methinks I see it now, — how in the sun
Its stony surface glittered like a shield;
And in that miserable place we left him,
Alone but for a swarm of minute creatures
Not one of which could help him while alive,
Or mourn him dead.

Mar. A man by men cast off,
Left without burial! Nay, not dead nor dying,
But standing, walking, stretching forth his arms,
In all things like ourselves, but in the agony
With which he called for mercy; and — even so —
He was forsaken?

Osw. There is a power in sounds:
The cries he uttered might have stopped the boat
That bore us through the water ——

Mar. You returned
Upon that dismal hearing, — did you not?

Osw. Some scoffed at him with hellish mockery,
And laughed so loud, it seemed that the smooth sea
Did from some distant region echo us.

Mar. We all are of one blood, our veins are filled
At the same poisonous fountain!

Osw. 'T was an island
Only by sufferance of the winds and waves,
Which with their foam could cover it at will.
I know not how he perished; but the calm,
The same dead calm, continued many days.
Mar. But his own crime had brought on him this doom,
His wickedness prepared it; these expedients
Are terrible, yet ours is not the fault.
Osw. The man was famished, and was innocent
Mar. Impossible!
Osw. The man had never wronged me.
Mar. Banish the thought, crush it, and be at peace.
His guilt was marked,— these things could never be
Were there not eyes that see, and for good ends,
Where ours are baffled.
Osw. I had been deceived.
Mar. And from that hour the miserable man
No more was heard of?
Osw. I had been betrayed.
Mar. And he found no deliverance!
Osw. The Crew
Gave me a hearty welcome; they had laid
The plot to rid themselves, at any cost,
Of a tyrannic Master whom they loathed.
So we pursued our voyage: when we landed,
The tale was spread abroad; my power at once
Shrunk from me; plans and schemes, and lofty hopes,—
All vanished. I gave way — do you attend?

Mar. The Crew deceived you?
Osw. Nay, command yourself.
Mar. It is a dismal night,— how the wind howls!
Osw. I hid my head within a Convent, there
Lay passive as a dormouse in mid-winter.
That was no life for me, — I was o'erthrown,
But not destroyed.
Mar. The proofs — you ought to have seen
The guilt — have touched it — felt it at your heart —
As I have done.
Osw. A fresh tide of Crusaders
Drove by the place of my retreat: three nights
Did constant meditation dry my blood;
Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
Through words and things, a dim and perilous way;
And, wheresoe'er I turned me, I beheld
A slavery compared to which the dungeon
And clanking chains are perfect liberty.
You understand me — I was comforted;
I saw that every possible shape of action
Might lead to good, — I saw it and burst forth
Thirsting for some of those exploits that fill
The earth for sure redemption of lost peace.
[*Marking* MARMADUKE'S *countenance.*
Nay, you have had the worst. Ferocity
Subsided in a moment, like a wind
That drops down dead out of a sky it vexed.
And yet I had within me evermore
A salient spring of energy; I mounted

From action up to action with a mind
That never rested, — without meat or drink
Have I lived many days, — my sleep was bound
To purposes of reason, — not a dream
But had a continuity and substance
That waking life had never power to give.

Mar. O wretched Human-kind! — Until the mystery
Of all this world is solved, well may we envy
The worm, that, underneath a stone whose weight
Would crush the lion's paw with mortal anguish,
Doth lodge, and feed, and coil, and sleep, in safety.
Fell not the wrath of Heaven upon those traitors?

Osw. Give not to them a thought. From Palestine
We marched to Syria: oft I left the camp,
When all that multitude of hearts was still,
And followed on, through woods of gloomy cedar
Into deep chasms troubled by roaring streams;
Or from the top of Lebanon surveyed
The moonlight desert, and the moonlight sea:
In these my lonely wanderings I perceived
What mighty objects do impress their forms
To elevate our intellectual being;
And felt, if aught on earth deserves a curse,
'T is that worst principle of ill which dooms
A thing so great to perish self-consumed.
— So much for my remorse!

Mar. Unhappy man!

Osw. When from these forms I turned to contemplate

The World's opinions and her usages,
I seemed a being who had passed alone
Into a region of futurity,
Whose natural element was freedom ——
Mar. Stop —
I may not, cannot, follow thee.
Osw. You must.
I had been nourished by the sickly food
Of popular applause. I now perceived
That we are praised, only as men in us
Do recognize some image of themselves,
An abject counterpart of what they are,
Or the empty thing that they would wish to be.
I felt that merit has no surer test
Than obloquy; that, if we wish to serve
The world in substance, not deceive by show,
We must become obnoxious to its hate,
Or fear disguised in simulated scorn.
Mar. I pity, can forgive, you; but those wretches, —
That monstrous perfidy!
Osw. Keep down your wrath.
False Shame discarded, spurious Fame despised,
Twin sisters both of Ignorance, I found
Life stretched before me smooth as some broad way
Cleared for a monarch's progress. Priests might spin
Their veil, but not for me, — 't was in fit place
Among its kindred cobwebs. I had been,
And in that dream had left my native land,

One of Love's simple bondsmen, — the soft chain
Was off for ever; and the men, from whom
This liberation came, you would destroy:
Join me in thanks for their blind services.
Mar. 'T is a strange aching that, when we would curse
And cannot. — You have betrayed me — I have done —
I am content — I know that he is guiltless —
That both are guiltless, without spot or stain,
Mutually consecrated. Poor old man!
And I had heart for this, because thou lovedst
Her who from very infancy had been
Light to thy path, warmth to thy blood! — To gether [*Turning to* OSWALD.
We propped his steps, he leaned upon us both.
Osw. Ay, we are coupled by a chain of adamant;
Let us be fellow-laborers, then, to enlarge
Man's intellectual empire. We subsist
In slavery; all is slavery; we receive
Laws, but we ask not whence those laws have come;
We need an inward sting to goad us on.
Mar. Have you betrayed me? Speak to that.
Osw. The mask,
Which for a season I have stooped to wear,
Must be cast off. — Know then that I was urged.
(For other impulse let it pass,) was driven,
To seek for sympathy, because I saw
In you a mirror of my youthful self;

I would have made us equal once again,
But that was a vain hope. You have struck home,
With a few drops of blood cut short the business;
Therein for ever you must yield to me.
But what is done will save you from the blank
Of living without knowledge that you live:
Now you are suffering, — for the future day,
'T is his who will command it. — Think of my story —
Herbert is *innocent.*

Mar. (*in a faint voice, and doubtingly.*) You do but echo
My own wild words?

Osw. Young Man, the seed must lie
Hid in the earth, or there can be no harvest;
'T is Nature's law. What I have done in darkness
I will avow before the face of day.
Herbert *is* innocent.

Mar. What fiend could prompt
This action? Innocent! — O breaking heart! —
Alive or dead, I 'll find him. [*Exit.*

Osw. Alive — perdition! [*Exit.*

SCENE, *the inside of a poor Cottage.*

ELEANOR *and* IDONEA *seated.*

Idon. The storm beats hard. Mercy for poor or rich,
Whose heads are shelterless in such a night

A Voice without. Holla! to bed, good Folks within!

Elea. O save us.

Idon. What can this mean?

Elea. Alas, for my poor husband! — We'll have a counting of our flocks to-morrow; The wolf keeps festival these stormy nights: Be calm, sweet Lady, they are wassailers

[*The voices die away in the distance.*

Returning from their feast. — My heart beats so — A noise at midnight does *so* frighten me!

Idon. Hush! [*Listening.*

Elea. They are gone. On such a night, my husband, Dragged from his bed, was cast into a dungeon, Where, hid from me, he counted many years, A criminal in no one's eyes but theirs — Not even in theirs — whose brutal violence So dealt with him.

Idon. I have a noble friend First among youths of knightly breeding, one Who lives but to protect the weak or injured. There again! [*Listening.*

Elea. 'T is my husband's foot. Good Eldred Has a kind heart; but his imprisonment Has made him fearful, and he 'll never be The man he was.

Idon. I will retire; — good night!

[*She goes within*

Enter ELDRED (*hides a bundle*).

Eld. Not yet in bed, Eleanor! — there are stains in that frock which must be washed out.

Elea. What has befallen you?

Eld. I am belated, and you must know the cause. — (*Speaking low.*) That is the blood of an unhappy man.

Elea. Oh! we are undone for ever.

Eld. Heaven forbid that I should lift my hand against any man. Eleanor, I have shed tears to-night, and it comforts me to think of it.

Elea. Where, where is he?

Eld. I have done him no harm, but —— It will be forgiven me; it would not have been so once.

Elea. You have not *buried* any thing? You are no richer than when you left me?

Eld. Be at peace; I am innocent.

Elea. Then God be thanked ——

[*A short pause; she falls upon his neck.*

Eld. To-night I met with an old man lying stretched upon the ground, — a sad spectacle: I raised him up, with a hope that we might shelter and restore him.

Elea. (*as if ready to run.*) Where is he? You were not able to bring him *all* the way with you; let us return, I can help you.

[ELDRED *shakes his head.*

Eld. He did not seem to wish for life: as I was struggling on, by the light of the moon I saw the stains of blood upon my clothes; — he waved his

hand, as if it were all useless; and I let him sink again to the ground.

Elea. O that I had been by your side!

Eld. I tell you his hands and his body were cold, — how could I disturb his last moments? he strove to turn from me, as if he wished to settle into sleep.

Elea. But, for the stains of blood ——

Eld. He must have fallen, I fancy, for his head was cut; but I think his malady was cold and hunger.

Elea. O Eldred, I shall never be able to look up at this roof in storm or fair but I shall tremble.

Eld. Is it not enough that my ill stars have kept me abroad to night till this hour? I come home, and this is my comfort!

Elea. But did he say nothing which might have set you at ease?

Eld. I thought he grasped my hand while he was muttering something about his child, — his daughter. —(*Starting as if he heard a noise.*) What is that?

Elea. Eldred, you are a father.

Eld. God knows what was in my heart, and will not curse my son for my sake.

Elea. But you prayed by him? you waited the hour of his release?

Eld. The night was wasting fast; I have no friend; I am spited by the world — his wound terrified me — if I had brought him along with

me, and he had died in my arms ! —— I am sure I heard something breathing, — and this chair !

Elea. O Eldred, you will die alone. You will have nobody to close your eyes, — no hand to grasp your dying hand, — I shall be in my grave. A curse will attend us all.

Eld. Have you forgot your own troubles when I was in the dungeon ?

Elea. And you left him alive ?

Eld. Alive ! — the damps of death were upon him, — he could not have survived an hour.

Elea. In the cold, cold night.

Eld. (*in a savage tone.*) Ay, and his head was bare ; I suppose you would have had me lend my bonnet to cover it. — You will never rest till I am brought to a felon's end.

Elea. Is there nothing to be done ? Cannot we go to the Convent ?

Eld. Ay, and say at once that I murdered him !

Elea. Eldred, I know that ours is the only house upon the Waste ; let us take heart ; this man may be rich ; and could he be saved by our means, his gratitude may reward us.

Eld. 'T is all in vain.

Elea. But let us make the attempt. This old man may have a wife, and he may have children. Let us return to the spot : we may restore him, and his eyes may yet open upon those that love him.

Eld. He will never open them more : even

when he spoke to me, he kept them firmly sealed,
as if he had been blind.

Idon. (*rushing out.*) It is, it is, my father —

Eld. We are betrayed (*looking at* IDONEA.)

Elea. His daughter! — God have mercy (*turning to* IDONEA.)

Idon. (*sinking down.*) Oh! lift me up and carry me to the place.
You are safe; the whole world shall not harm you.

Elea. This lady is his daughter.

Eld. (*moved.*) I 'll lead you to the spot.

Idon. (*springing up.*) Alive! — you heard him breathe? quick, quick —— [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE, *A Wood on the edge of the Waste.*

Enter OSWALD *and a* Forester.

For. He leaned upon the bridge that spans the glen,
And down into the bottom cast his eye,
That fastened there, as it would check the current.

Osw. He listened too; did you not say he listened?

For. As if there came such moaning from the flood
As is heard often after stormy nights.

Osw. But did he utter nothing?
For. See him there!

MARMADUKE *appearing.*

Mar. Buzz, buzz, ye black and winged free-booters:
That is no substance which ye settle on!
For. His senses play him false; and see, his arms
Outspread, as if to save himself from falling! —
Some terrible phantom I believe is now
Passing before him, such as God will not
Permit to visit any but a man
Who has been guilty of some horrid crime.
[MARMADUKE *disappears.*
Osw. The game is up! —
For. If it be needful, Sir,
I will assist you to lay hands upon him.
Osw. No, no, my Friend, you may pursue your business, —
'T is a poor wretch of an unsettled mind,
Who has a trick of straying from his keepers;
We must be gentle. Leave him to my care.
[*Exit* Forester.
If his own eyes play false with him, these freaks
Of fancy shall be quickly tamed by mine;
The goal is reached. My master shall become
A shadow of myself, — made by myself.

SCENE, *the edge of the Moor.*

MARMADUKE *and* ELDRED *enter from opposite sides.*

Mar. (*raising his eyes and perceiving* ELDRED.)
In any corner of this savage waste,
Have you, good Peasant, seen a blind old man?
Eld. I heard ——
Mar. You heard him, where? when heard him?
Eld. As you know,
The first hours of last night were rough with storm:
I had been out in search of a stray heifer;
Returning late, I heard a moaning sound;
Then, thinking that my fancy had deceived me,
I hurried on, when straight a second moan,
A human voice distinct, struck on my ear.
So guided, distant a few steps, I found
An aged man, and such as you describe.
Mar. You heard! — he called you to him? Of all men
The best and kindest! But where is he? guide me
That I may see him.
Eld. On a ridge of rocks
A lonesome Chapel stands, deserted now:
The bell is left, which no one dares remove;
And, when the stormy wind blows o'er the peak,
It rings, as if a human hand were there
To pull the cord. I guess he must have heard it
And it had led him towards the precipice,

To climb up to the spot whence the sound came;
But he had failed through weakness. From his hand
His staff had dropped, and close upon the brink
Of a small pool of water he was laid,
As if he had stooped to drink, and so remained
Without the strength to rise.

Mar. Well, well, he lives,
And all is safe: what said he?

Eld. But few words:
He only spake to me of a dear daughter,
Who, so he feared, would never see him more;
And of a stranger to him, one by whom
He had been sore misused; but he forgave
The wrong and the wrong-doer. You are troubled, —
Perhaps you are his son?

Mar. The All-seeing knows
I did not think he had a living child. —
But whither did you carry him?

Eld. He was torn,
His head was bruised, and there was blood about him ——

Mar. That was no work of mine.

Eld. Nor was it mine.

Mar. But had he strength to walk? I could have borne him
A thousand miles.

Eld. I am in poverty,
And know how busy are the tongues of men;
My heart was willing, Sir, but I am one

Whose good deeds will not stand by their own light;
And, though it smote me more than worlds can tell,
I left him.

Mar. I believe that there are phantoms,
That in the shape of man do cross our path
On evil instigation, to make sport
Of our distress, — and thou art one of them!
But things substantial have so pressed on me ——

Eld. My wife and children came into my mind.

Mar. O Monster! Monster! there are three of us,
And we shall howl together.

[*After a pause and in a feeble voice.*

I am deserted
At my worst need, my crimes have in a net
(*Pointing to* ELDRED) Entangled this poor man. —
Where was it? where?

[*Dragging him along*

Eld. 'T is needless; spare your violence. His daughter ——

Mar. Ay, in the word a thousand scorpions lodge:
This old man *had* a daughter.

Eld. To the spot
I hurried back with her. — O, save me, Sir,
From such a journey! —— There was a black tree
A single tree; she thought it was her father. —
O Sir, I would not see that hour again
For twenty lives. The daylight dawned, and now —

Nay; hear my tale, 't is fit that you should hear it —
As we approached, a solitary crow
Rose from the spot; — the daughter clapped her hands,
And then I heard a shriek so terrible
[MARMADUKE *shrinks back.*
The startled bird quivered upon the wing.

Mar. Dead, dead! —

Eld. (*after a pause.*) A dismal matter, Sir, for me,
And seems the like for you; if 't is your wish,
I 'll lead you to his daughter; but 't were best
That she should be prepared; I 'll go before.

Mar. There will be need of preparation.
[ELDRED *goes off.*

Elea. (*enters.*) Master!
Your limbs sink under you, shall I support you?

Mar. (*taking her arm.*) Woman, I 've lent my body to the service
Which now thou takest upon thee. God forbid
That thou shouldst ever meet a like occasion
With such a purpose in thine heart as mine was.

Elea. O, why have I to do with things like these?
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to the door of* ELDRED'S *cottage.* — IDONEA *seated.* — *Enter* ELDRED.

Eld. Your father, Lady, from a wilful hand
Has met unkindness; so indeed he told me,

And you remember such was my report:
From what has just befallen me I have cause
To fear the very worst.
Idon. My father is dead;
Why dost thou come to me with words like these?
Eld. A wicked man should answer for his crimes.
Idon. Thou seest me what I am.
Eld. It was most heinous,
And doth call out for vengeance.
Idon. Do not add,
I prith'ee, to the harm thou 'st done already.
Eld. Hereafter you will thank me for this service.
Hard by, a man I met, who, from plain proofs
Of interfering Heaven, I have no doubt,
Laid hands upon your father. Fit it were
You should prepare to meet him.
Idon. I have nothing
To do with others; help me to my father —
[*She turns and sees* MARMADUKE *leaning on* ELEANOR, — *throws herself upon his neck and after some time,*
In joy I met thee, but a few hours past;
And thus we meet again; one human stay
Is left me still in thee. Nay, shake not so.
Mar. In such a wilderness, — to see no thing,
No, not the pitying moon!
Idon. And perish so.
Mar. Without a dog to moan for him.
Idon. Think not of it.

But enter there and see him how he sleeps,
Tranquil as he had died in his own bed.

Mar. Tranquil, — why not?

Idon. O, peace!

Mar. He is at peace;
His body is at rest: there was a plot,
A hideous plot, against the soul of man·
It took effect, — and yet I baffled it,
In *some* degree.

Idon. Between us stood, I thought,
A cup of consolation, filled from heaven
For both our needs; must I, and in thy presence,
Alone partake of it? — Beloved Marmaduke!

Mar. Give me a reason why the wisest thing
That the earth owns shall never choose to die,
But some one must be near to count his groans.
The wounded deer retires to solitude,
And dies in solitude: all things but man,
All die in solitude.

[*Moving towards the cottage door.*
Mysterious God,
If she had never lived I had not done it!

Idon. Alas! the thought of such a cruel death
Has overwhelmed him. — I must follow.

Eld. Lady!
You will do well; (*she goes*) unjust suspicion may
Cleave to this stranger: if, upon his entering,
The dead man heave a groan, or from his side
Uplift his hand, — that would be evidence.

Elea Shame! Eldred, shame!

Mar. (*both returning.*) The dead have but one face. (*To himself.*)
And such a man, — so meek and unoffending, —
Helpless and harmless as a babe: a man,
By obvious signal to the world's protection,
Solemnly dedicated, — to decoy him! —
Idon. O, had you seen him living! —
Mar. I (so filled
With horror is this world) am unto thee
The thing most precious that it now contains:
Therefore through me alone must be revealed
By whom thy parent was destroyed, Idonea!
I have the proofs! —
Idon. O miserable father!
Thou didst command me to bless all mankind;
Nor to this moment have I ever wished
Evil to any living thing; but hear me,
Hear me, ye Heavens! — (*kneeling.*) — May vengeance haunt the fiend
For this most cruel murder: let him live
And move in terror of the elements;
The thunder send him on his knees to prayer
In the open streets, and let him think he sees,
If e'er he entereth the house of God,
The roof, self-moved, unsettling o'er his head;
And let him, when he would lie down at night,
Point to his wife the blood-drops on his pillow!
Mar. My voice was silent, but my heart hath joined thee.
Idon. (*leaning on* MARMADUKE.) Left to the mercy of that savage man!

How could he call upon his child! — O Friend!
[*Turns to* MARMADUKE.
My faithful, true, and only comforter.

Mar. Ay, come to me and weep. (*He kisses her.,*
(*To* ELDRED.) Yes, Varlet, look,
The devils at such sights do clap their hands.
[ELDRED *retires alarmed.*

Idon. Thy vest is torn, thy cheek is deadly pale;
Hast thou pursued the monster?

Mar. I have found him. —
O, would that thou hadst perished in the flames!

Idon. Here art thou, then can I be desolate?

Mar. There was a time, when this protecting hand
Availed against the mighty; never more
Shall blessings wait upon a deed of mine.

Idon. Wild words for me to hear, for me, an orphan,
Committed to thy guardianship by Heaven;
And, if thou hast forgiven me, let me hope,
In this deep sorrow, trust, that I am thine
For closer care; — here is no malady.
[*Taking his arm.*

Mar. There *is* a malady —
(*Striking his heart and forehead.*) And here, and here,
A mortal malady. — I am accurst:
All nature curses me, and in my heart
Thy curse is fixed; the truth must be laid bare.
It must be told, and borne. I am the man,
(Abused, betrayed, but how it matters not,)

Presumptuous above all that ever breathed,
Who, casting as I thought a guilty person
Upon Heaven's righteous judgment, did becor .
An instrument of fiends Through me, through as.
Thy father perished.

Idon. Perished — by what mischance?

Mar. Belovèd — if I dared, so would I call thee - -
Conflict must cease, and, in thy frozen heart,
The extremes of suffering meet in absolute peace.
[*He gives her a letter.*

Idon. (*reads.*) "Be not surprised if you hear that some signal judgment has befallen the man who calls himself your father; he is now with me, as his signature will show: abstain from conjecture till you see me. "HERBERT.
"MARMADUKE."
The writing Oswald's; the signature my father's:
(*Looks steadily at the paper.*) And here is yours,—
or do my eyes deceive me?
You have then seen my father?

Mar. He has leaned
Upon this arm.

Idon. You led him towards the Convent

Mar. That Convent was Stone-Arthur Castle
Thither
We were his guides. I on that night resolved
That he should wait thy coming till the day
Of resurrection.

Idon. Miserable woman,
Too quickly moved, too easily giving way,

I put denial on thy suit, and hence,
With the disastrous issue of last night,
Thy perturbation, and these frantic words.
Be calm, I pray thee!

Mar. Oswald——

Idon. Name him not.

Enter female Beggar.

Beg. And he is dead! — that Moor, — how shall I cross it?
By night, by day, never shall I be able
To travel half a mile alone. — Good Lady!
Forgive me! — Saints forgive me! Had I thought
It would have come to this! —

Idon. What brings you hither? speak!

Beg. (*pointing to* MARMADUKE.) This innocent Gentleman. Sweet heavens! I told him
Such tales of your dead father! — God is my judge,
I thought there was no harm; but that bad man,
He bribed me with his gold, and looked so fierce.
Mercy! I said I know not what — O pity me! —
I said, sweet Lady, you were not his daughter —
Pity me, I am haunted! — thrice this day
My conscience made me wish to be struck blind;
And then I would have prayed, and had no voice.

Idon. (*to* MARMADUKE.) Was it my father? no, no, no, for he
Was meek and patient, feeble, old, and blind,
Helpless, and loved me dearer than his life.
— But hear me. For *one* question, I have a heart
That will sustain me. Did you murder him?

Mar. No, not by stroke of arm. But learn the process:
Proof after proof was pressed upon me; guilt
Made evident, as seemed, by blacker guilt,
Whose impious folds enwrapped even thee; and truth
And innocence, embodied in his looks,
His words and tones and gestures, did but serve
With me to aggravate his crimes, and heaped
Ruin upon the cause for which they pleaded.
Then pity crossed the path of my resolve:
Confounded, I looked up to Heaven, and cast,
Idonea! thy blind father, on the ordeal
Of the bleak waste — left him — and so he died! —
[IDONEA *sinks senseless;* Beggar, ELEANOR, &c. *crowd round, and bear her off.*
Why may we speak these things, and do no more
Why should a thrust of the arm have such a power
And words that tell these things be heard in vain?
She is not dead. Why! — if I loved this woman,
I would take care she never woke again;
But she WILL wake, and she will weep for me,
And say, no blame was mine — and so, poor fool,
Will waste her curses on another name.
[*He walks about distractedly.*

Enter OSWALD.

OSWALD (*to himself*). Strong to o'erturn, strong also to build up. [*To* MARMADUKE
The starts and sallies of our last encounter
Were natural enough; but that, I trust

Is all gone by. You have cast off the chains
That fettered your nobility of mind, —
Delivered heart and head!
Let us to Palestine;
This is a paltry field for enterprise.

Mar. Ay, what shall we encounter next? This issue, —
'T was nothing more than darkness deepening darkness,
And weakness crowned with the impotence of death! —
Your pupil is, you see, an apt proficient.
[*Ironically.*
Start not! — Here is another face hard by;
Come, let us take a peep at both together,
And, with a voice at which the dead will quake,
Resound the praise of your morality —
Of this too much.

[*Drawing* OSWALD *towards the Cottage, — stops short at the door.*
Men are there, millions, Oswald,
Who with bare hands would have plucked out thy heart
And flung it to the dogs: but I am raised
Above, or sunk below, all further sense
Of provocation. Leave me, with the weight
Of that old man's forgiveness on thy heart,
Pressing as heavily as it doth on mine.
Coward I have been; know, there lies not now
Within the compass of a mortal thought

A deed that I would shrink from; — but to endure,
That is my destiny. May it be thine:
Thy office, thy ambition, be henceforth
To feed remorse, to welcome every sting
Of penitential anguish, yea, with tears.
When seas and continents shall lie between us —
The wider space the better — we may find
In such a course fit links of sympathy,
An incommunicable rivalship
Maintained, for peaceful ends beyond our view.

[*Confused voices. — Several of the Band enter, rush upon* OSWALD, *and seize him.*

One of them. I would have dogged him to the jaws of hell —

Osw. Ha! is it so! — That vagrant Hag! — this comes
Of having left a thing like her alive! [*Aside.*

Several voices. Despatch him!

Osw. If I pass beneath a rock
And shout, and, with the echo of my voice,
Bring down a heap of rubbish, and it crush me,
I die without dishonor. Famished, starved,
A Fool and Coward blended to my wish!

[*Smiles scornfully and exultingly at* MARMADUKE.

Wal. 'T is done! (*stabs him.*)

Another of the band. The ruthless traitor!

Mar. A rash deed! —
With that reproof I do resign a station
Of which I have been proud.

Wil. (*approaching* MARMADUKE.) O my poor
Master!
Mar. Discerning Monitor, my faithful Wilfred,
Why art thou here? [*Turning to* WALLACE.
Wallace, upon these Borders,
Many there be whose eyes will not want cause
To weep that I am gone. Brothers in arms!
Raise on that dreary Waste a monument
That may record my story: nor let words —
Few must they be, and delicate in their touch
As light itself — be there withheld from her
Who, through most wicked arts, was made an or-
phan
By one who would have died a thousand times,
To shield her from a moment's harm. To you,
Wallace and Wilfred, I commend the lady,
By lowly nature reared, as if to make her
In all things worthier of that noble birth,
Whose long suspended rights are now on the eve
Of restoration: with your tenderest care
Watch over her, I pray — sustain her ——
Several of the Band (*eagerly*). Captain.
Mar. No more of that; in silence hear my doom;
A hermitage has furnished fit relief
To some offenders; other penitents,
Less patient in their wretchedness, have fallen,
Like the old Roman, on their own sword's point.
They had their choice: a wanderer *must I* go,
The spectre of that innocent man my guide.
No human ear shall ever hear me speak;

No human dwelling ever give me food,
Or sleep, or rest: but, over waste and wild,
In search of nothing, that this earth can give,
But expiation, will I wander on —
A man by pain and thought compelled to live,
Yet loathing life — till anger is appeased
In Heaven, and Mercy gives me leave to die.

1795-6

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD.

I.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

1804

II.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

Stay near me; do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart!

Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My father's family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey: — with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her! feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

1801

III.

THE SPARROW'S NEST.

Behold, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started, — seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;
Dreading, tho' wishing, to be near it:
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy.

1801

IV.

FORESIGHT.

THAT is work of waste and ruin —
Do as Charles and I are doing!
Strawberry-blossoms, one and all,
We must spare them — here are many:
Look at it — the flower is small,
Small and low, though fair as any:
Do not touch it! summers two
I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the primrose, sister Anne!
Pull as many as you can.
— Here are daisies, take your fill
Pansies, and the cuckoo-flower:

Of the lofty daffodil
Make your bed, or make your bower;
Fill your lap, and fill your bosom;
Only spare the strawberry-blossom!

Primroses, the Spring may love them,
Summer knows but little of them;
Violets, a barren kind,
Withered on the ground must lie;
Daisies leave no fruit behind
When the pretty flowerets die;
Pluck them, and another year
As many will be blowing here.

God has given a kindlier power
To the favored strawberry-flower.
Hither soon as Spring is fled
You and Charles and I will walk;
Lurking berries, ripe and red,
Then will hang on every stalk,
Each within its leafy bower;
And for that promise spare the flower!

1802.

V.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE YEARS OLD.

Loving she is, and tractable, though wild;
And Innocence hath privilege in her

To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a fagot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone,
Than when both young and old sit gathered round
And take delight in its activity;
Even so this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient; solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's,
Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched;
Unthought-of, unexpected, as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-flowers,
Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-colored images imprest
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

1811.

VI.

ADDRESS TO A CHILD,

DURING A BOISTEROUS WINTER EVENING.

BY MY SISTER.

WHAT way does the Wind come? What way does
he go?
He rides over the water, and over the snow,

Through wood, and through vale ; and, o'er rocky
height
Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding
flight ;
He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see ;
But how he will come, and whither he goes,
There 's never a scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook,
And ring a sharp 'larum ; — but, if you should look,
There 's nothing to see but a cushion of snow,
Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were covered with silk.
Sometimes he 'll hide in the cave of a rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock ;
— Yet seek him, — and what shall you find in the
place ?
Nothing but silence and empty space ;
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he 's left, for a bed, to beggars or thieves !

As soon as 't is daylight to-morrow, with me
You shall go to the orchard, and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn them about
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright
twig
That looked up at the sky so proud and big
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show !

Hark! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle:
— But let him range round; he does us no harm
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm;
Untouched by his breath, see, the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light;
Books have we to read,— but that half-stifled knell,
Alas; 't is the sound of the eight o'clock bell.
— Come now we 'll to bed! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care?
He may knock at the door,— we'll not let him in;
May drive at the windows,— we'll laugh at his din;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be;
Here 's a *cozie* warm house for Edward and me.

1804.

VII.

THE MOTHER'S RETURN.

BY THE SAME.

A MONTH, sweet Little-ones, is past
Since your dear Mother went away —
And she to-morrow will return;
To-morrow is the happy day.

O blessed tidings! thought of joy!
The eldest heard with steady glee;
Silent he stood; then laughed amain,—
And shouted, "Mother, come to me!"

Louder and louder did he shout,
With witless hope to bring her near·
"Nay, patience! patience, little boy!
Your tender mother cannot hear."

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through;—
He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed,
But he submits; what can he do?

No strife disturbs his sister's breast;
She wars not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day;
The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note,
And echoes back his sister's glee;
They hug the infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower;
While sweetly shone the evening sun
In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done, —
Our rambles by the swift brook's side
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where two fair swans together glide.

We talked of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,
Of birds that build their nests and sing,
And all "since Mother went away"!

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her our new-born tribes will show,
The goslings green, the ass's colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

— But, see, the evening star comes forth!
To bed the children must depart;
A moment's heaviness they feel,
A sadness at the heart:

'T is gone, — and in a merry fit
They run up stairs in gamesome race;
I, too, infected by their mood,
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Five minutes past, — and O the change!
Asleep upon their beds they lie;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye.

1807

VIII.

ALICE FELL;

OR, POVERTY.

THE post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon had drowned
When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound.

As if the wind blew many ways,
I heard the sound, — and more and more;
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy called out;
He stopped his horses at the word,
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain;
But, hearing soon upon the blast
The cry. I bade him halt again.

Forthwith alighting on the ground,
"Whence comes," said I, "this piteous moan?"
And there a little Girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

"My cloak!" no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

"What ails you, child?" She sobbed, "Look here!
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er
From any garden scarecrow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed!

"And whither are you going, child,
To-night, along these lonesome ways?"
"To Durham," answered she, half wild.
"Then come with me into the chaise."

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

"My child, in Durham do you dwell?"
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, "My name is Alice Fell;
I'm fatherless and motherless.

"And I to Durham, Sir, belong."
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
And all was for her tattered cloak!

The chaise drove on; our journey's end
Was nigh; and, sitting by my side,
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern door we post;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

"And let it be of duffel gray,
As warm a cloak as man can sell!"
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell!

1801

IX.

LUCY GRAY

OR, SOLITUDE.

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see, at break of day,
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor, —
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night, —
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'T is scarcely afternoon, —
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapped a fagot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on the hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept,—and, turning homeward, cried
"In heaven we all shall meet";—
When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn-hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

— Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

1799

X.

WE ARE SEVEN.

——— A simple Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;—
Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the churchyard cottage,
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the churchyard lie,
Beneath the churchyard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the churchyard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the churchyard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'T was throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

1798

XI.

THE IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS;

OR, DUNGEON-GHYLL FORCE.*

A PASTORAL.

THE valley rings with mirth and joy;
Among the hills the echoes play
A never, never ending song,
To welcome in the May.
The magpie chatters with delight;
The mountain raven's youngling brood
Have left the mother and the nest;
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food;
Or through the glittering vapors dart
In very wantonness of heart.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two boys are sitting in the sun;
Their work, if any work they have,
Is out of mind, — or done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas hymn;
Or with that plant which in our dale
We call stag-horn, or fox's tail,

* *Ghyll*, in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland, is a short, and for the most part a steep, narrow valley, with a stream running through it. *Force* is the word universally employed in these dialects for waterfall.

Their rusty hats they trim:
And thus, as happy as the day,
Those Shepherds wear the time away.

Along the river's stony marge
The sand-lark chants a joyous song;
The thrush is busy in the wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand lambs are on the rocks,
All newly born! both earth and sky
Keep jubilee, and more than all,
Those boys with their green coronal;
They never hear the cry,
That plaintive cry! which up the hill
Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Ghyll.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
"Down to the stump of yon old yew
We'll for our whistles run a race."
——Away the shepherds flew;
They leapt,—they ran,—and when they came
Right opposite to Dungeon-Ghyll,
Seeing that he should lose the prize,
"Stop!" to his comrade Walter cries.
James stopped with no good will:
Said Walter then, exulting, "Here
You 'll find a task for half a year.

"Cross, if you dare, where I shall cross,—
Come on, and tread where I shall tread"

The other took him at his word,
And followed as he led.
It was a spot which you may see
If ever you to Langdale go;
Into the chasm a mighty block
Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock.
The gulf is deep below;
And, in a basin black and small,
Receives a lofty waterfall.

With staff in hand across the cleft
The challenger pursued his march;
And now, all eyes and feet, hath gained
The middle of the arch.
When list! he hears a piteous moan.
Again! — his heart within him dies;
His pulse is stopped, his breath is lost,
He totters, pallid as a ghost,
And, looking down, espies
A lamb, that in the pool is pent
Within that black and frightful rent.

The lamb had slipped into the stream,
And safe without a bruise or wound
The cataract had borne him down
Into the gulf profound.
His dam had seen him when he fell,
She saw him down the torrent borne;
And, while with all a mother's love
She from the lofty rocks above

Sent forth a cry forlorn,
The lamb, still swimming round and round,
Made answer in that plaintive sound.

When he had learnt what thing it was
That sent this rueful cry, I ween
The boy recovered heart, and told
The sight which he had seen.
Both gladly now deferred their task;
Nor was there wanting other aid:
A Poet, one who loves the brooks
Far better than the sages' books,
By chance had hither strayed;
And there the helpless lamb he found
By those huge rocks encompassed round.

He drew it from the troubled pool,
And brought it forth into the light:
The Shepherds met him with his charge,
An unexpected sight!
Into their arms the lamb they took,
Whose life and limbs the flood had spared;
Then up the steep ascent they hied,
And placed him at his mother's side;
And gently did the Bard
Those idle shepherd-boys upbraid,
And bade them better mind their trade.

1800

XII.

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS.

Retine vim istam, falsa enim dicam, si coges." — EUSEBIUS

I HAVE a boy of five years old;
His face is fair and fresh to see;
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me, — and each trace
Of inward sadness had its charm ;
Kilve, thought I, was a favored place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress !
And, as we talked, I questioned him,
In very idleness.

" Now tell me, had you rather be,"
I said, and took him by the arm,
" On Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea
Or here at Liswyn farm ? "

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, " At Kilve I 'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm."

" Now, little Edward, say why so :
My little Edward, tell me why." —
" I cannot tell, I do not know." —
" Why, this is strange," said I ;

" For here are woods, hills smooth and warm
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea."

At this, my boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply,
And three times to the child I said,
"Why, Edward, tell me why?"

His head he raised; there was in sight,—
It caught his eye, he saw it plain,—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And eased his mind with this reply:
"At Kilve there was no weather-cock;
And that 's the reason why."

O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

1798.

XIII.

RURAL ARCHITECTURE.

THERE 's George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and Reginald Shore,
Three rosy-cheeked schoolboys, the highest not more
Than the height of a counsellor's bag

To the top of GREAT HOW * did it please them
to climb:
And there they built up, without mortar or lime,
A Man on the peak of the crag.

They built him of stones gathered up as they lay
They built him and christened him all in one day,
An urchin both vigorous and hale;
And so without scruple they called him Ralph
Jones.
Now Ralph is renowned for the length of his bones;
The Magog of Legberthwaite dale.

Just half a week after, the wind sallied forth,
And, in anger or merriment, out of the north,
Coming on with a terrible pother,
From the peak of the crag blew the giant away.
And what did these schoolboys? — The very next
day
They went and they built up another.

— Some little I 've seen of blind boisterous works
By Christian disturbers more savage than Turks,
Spirits busy to do and undo:
At rememberance whereof my blood sometimes
will flag;

* GREAT How is a single and conspicuous hill, which rises towards the foot of Thirlmere, on the western side of the beautiful dale of Legberthwaite, along the high road between Keswick and Ambleside.

Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the crag;
And I 'll build up a giant with you.

1801.

XIV.

THE PET LAMB.

A PASTORAL.

The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink;
I heard a voice; it said, "Drink, pretty creature, drink!"
And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain-lamb with a Maiden at its side.

Nor sheep nor kine were near; the lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone;
With one knee on the grass did the little Maiden kneel,
While to that mountain-lamb she gave its evening meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,
Seemed to feast with head and ears; and his tail with pleasure shook.

"Drink, pretty creature, drink!" she said, in such a tone
That I almost received her heart into my own.

'T was little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare!
I watched them with delight, they were a lovely pair.
Now with her empty can the Maiden turned away,
But ere ten yards were gone, her footsteps did she stay.

Right towards the lamb she looked; and from a shady place
I unobserved could see the workings of her face:
If nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little Maid might sing: —

"What ails thee, young One? what? Why pull so at thy cord?
Is it not well with thee? well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be;
Rest, little young One, rest; what is 't that aileth thee?

'What is it thou wouldst seek? What is wanting to thy heart?

Thy limbs, are they not strong? And beautiful
thou art:
This grass is tender grass; these flowers they have
no peers;
And that green cord all day is rustling in thy ears!

"If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy wool-
len chain,
This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst
gain;
For rain and mountain-storms! the like thou
need'st not fear,
The rain and storm are things that scarcely can
come here.

"Rest, little young One, rest; thou hast forgot the
day
When my father found thee first in places far away;
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned
by none,
And thy mother from thy side for evermore was
gone.

'He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee
home:
A blessed day for thee! then whither wouldst
thou roam?
A faithful nurse thou hast; the dam that did thee
yean
Upon the mountain-tops no kinder could have been

"Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought
thee in this can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with
dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, — warm milk it is
and new.

"Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they
are now,
Then I 'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the
plough;
My playmate thou shalt be; and when the wind
is cold,
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy
fold.

"It will not, will not rest! — Poor creature, can it be
That 't is thy mother's heart which is working so
in thee?
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see
nor hear.

"Alas, the mountain-tops that look so green and
fair!
I 've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come
there;
The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey

"Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky
Night and day thou art safe, — our cottage is
hard by.
Why bleat so after me? Why pull so at thy chain?
Sleep, — and at break of day I will come to thee
again!"

— As homeward through the lane I went with lazy
feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it
was *mine*.

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song;
"Nay," said I, "more than half to the damsel must
belong,
For she looked with such a look, and she spake
with such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my own."

1800.

XV.

TO H. C.

SIX YEARS OLD.

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;

Thou faery voyager! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
O blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality;
And Grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she sat within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly!
O vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow?
Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

1802

XVI.

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH.

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.

[This extract is reprinted from "The Friend."]

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought!
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man;
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear, — until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapors rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went

In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage windows through the twilight blazed.
I heeded not the summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village-clock tolled six, — I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. — All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures, — the resounding horn,
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star:

Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me, — even as if the Earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

1799.

XVII.

THE LONGEST DAY.

ADDRESSED TO MY DAUGHTER, DORA.

Let us quit the leafy arbor,
And the torrent murmuring by;
For the sun is in his harbor,
Weary of the open sky.

Evening now unbinds the fetters
Fashioned by the glowing light;
All that breathe are thankful debtors
To the harbinger of night

Yet by some grave thoughts attended
Eve renews her calm career;
For the day that now is ended
Is the longest of the year.

Dora! sport, as now thou sportest,
On this platform, light and free;
Take thy bliss, while longest, shortest,
Are indifferent to thee!

Who would check the happy feeling
That inspires the linnet's song?
Who would stop the swallow, wheeling
On her pinions swift and strong?

Yet, at this impressive season,
Words which tenderness can speak
From the truths of homely reason,
Might exalt the loveliest cheek;

And, while shades to shades succeeding
Steal the landscape from the sight,
I would urge this moral pleading,
Last forerunner of "Good night!"

Summer ebbs;— each day that follows
Is a reflux from on high,
Tending to the darksome hollows
Where the frosts of winter lie.

He who governs the creation,
In his providence, assigned
Such a gradual declination
To the life of human kind.

Yet we mark it not; — fruits redden,
Fresh flowers blow, as flowers have blown,
And the heart is loath to deaden
Hopes that she so long hath known.

Be thou wiser, youthful Maiden!
And when thy decline shall come,
Let not flowers, or boughs fruit-laden,
Hide the knowledge of thy doom.

Now, even now, ere wrapped in slumber,
Fix thine eyes upon the sea
That absorbs time, space, and number;
Look thou to Eternity!

Follow thou the flowing river
On whose breast are hither borne
All deceived, and each deceiver,
Through the gates of night and morn;

Through the year's successive portals;
Through the bounds which many a star
Marks, not mindless of frail mortals,
When his light returns from far

Thus when thou with Time hast travelled
Toward the mighty gulf of things,
And the mazy stream unravelled
With thy best imaginings, —

Think, if thou on beauty leanest,
Think how pitiful that stay,
Did not virtue give the meanest
Charms superior to decay.

Duty, like a strict preceptor,
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown;
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,
While youth's roses are thy crown.

Grasp it, — if thou shrink and tremble,
Fairest damsel of the green,
Thou wilt lack the only symbol
That proclaims a genuine queen,

And insures those palms of honor
Which selected spirits wear,
Bending low before the Donor,
Lord of heaven's unchanging year!

1817.

XVIII.

THE NORMAN BOY.

High on a broad, unfertile tract of forest-skirted
Down,
Nor kept by Nature for herself, nor made by man
his own,
From home and company remote and every playful
joy,
Served, tending a few sheep and goats, a ragged
Norman Boy.

Him never saw I, nor the spot; but from an Eng-
lish Dame,
Stranger to me and yet my friend, a simple notice
came,
With suit that I would speak in verse of that se-
questered child,
Whom, one bleak winter's day, she met upon the
dreary Wild.

His flock, along the woodland's edge with relics
sprinkled o'er
Of last night's snow, beneath a sky threatening the
fall of more,
Where tufts of herbage tempted each, were busy
at their feed,
And the poor Boy was busier still, with work of
anxious heed.

There *was* he, where of branches rent and withered and decayed,
For covert from the keen north wind, his hands a hut had made.
A tiny tenement, forsooth, and frail, as needs must be
A thing of such materials framed, by a builder such as he.

The hut stood finished by his pains, nor seemingly lacked aught
That skill or means of his could add, but the architect had wrought
Some limber twigs into a Cross, well shaped with fingers nice,
To be engrafted on the top of his small edifice.

That Cross he now was fastening there, as the surest power and best
For supplying all deficiencies, all wants of the rude nest
In which, from burning heat, or tempest driving far and wide,
The innocent Boy, else shelterless, his lonely head must hide.

That Cross belike he also raised as a standard for the true
And faithful service of his heart in the worst that might ensue

Of hardship and distressful fear, amid the houseless waste
Where he, in his poor self so weak, by Providence was placed.

—— Here, Lady! might I cease; but nay, let us before we part
With this dear holy shepherd-boy breathe a prayer of earnest heart,
That unto him, where'er shall lie his life's appointed way,
The Cross, fixed in his soul, may prove an all-sufficing stay.

XIX.

THE POET'S DREAM.

SEQUEL TO THE NORMAN BOY.

JUST as those final words were penned, the sun broke out in power,
And gladdened all things; but, as chanced, within that very hour,
Air blackened, thunder growled, fire flashed from clouds that hid the sky,
And, for the Subject of my Verse, I heaved a pensive sigh.

Nor could my heart by second thoughts from
heaviness be cleared,
For bodied forth before my eyes the cross-crowned
hut appeared;
And, while around it storm as fierce seemed trouble-
ling earth and air,
I saw, within, the Norman Boy kneeling alone in
prayer.

The Child, as if the thunder's voice spake with
articulate call,
Bowed meekly, in submissive fear, before the Lord
of All;
His lips were moving; and his eyes, upraised to
sue for grace,
With soft illumination cheered the dimness of that
place.

How beautiful is holiness! — what wonder if the
sight,
Almost as vivid as a dream, produced a dream at
night?
It came with sleep, and showed the Boy, no cherub,
not transformed,
But the poor ragged Thing whose ways my human
heart had warmed.

Me had the dream equipped with wings, so I took
him in my arms,
And lifted from the grassy floor, stilling his faint
alarms,

And bore him high through yielding air, my debt
of love to pay,
By giving him, for both our sakes, an hour of
holiday.

I whispered, "Yet a little while, dear Child! thou
art my own,
To show thee some delightful thing, in country or
in town.
What shall it be? a mirthful throng? or that holy
place and calm,
St. Denis, filled with royal tombs, or the Church
of Notre Dame?

"St. Ouen's golden Shrine? Or choose what else
would please thee most
Of any wonder Normandy, or all proud France,
can boast!"
"My mother," said the Boy, "was born near to a
blessèd Tree,
The Chapel Oak of Allonville; good Angel, show
it me!"

On wings, from broad and steadfast poise let loose
by this reply,
For Allonville, o'er down and dale, away then did
we fly;
O'er town and tower we flew, and fields in May's
fresh verdure drest;
The wings they did not flag; the Child, though
grave, was not deprest.

But who shall show, to waking sense, the gleam of
light that broke
Forth from his eyes, when first the Boy looked
down on that huge oak,
For length of days so much revered, so famous
where it stands
For twofold hallowing, — Nature's care, and work
of human hands?

Strong as an eagle, with my charge I glided round
and round
The wide-spread boughs, for view of door, window,
and stair that wound
Gracefully up the gnarled trunk; nor left we
unsurveyed
The pointed steeple peering forth from the centre
of the shade.

I lighted, — opened with soft touch the chapel's
iron door,
Past softly, leading in the Boy; and, while from
roof to floor,
From floor to roof, all round his eyes the Child
with wonder cast,
Pleasure on pleasure crowded in, each livelier than
the last.

For, deftly framed within the trunk, the sanctuary
showed,
By light of lamp and precious stones, that glim-
mered here, there glowed,

Shrine, Altar, Image, Offerings hung in sign of
gratitude;
Sight that inspired accordant thoughts; and speech
I thus renewed:

"Hither the Afflicted come, as thou hast heard
thy mother say,
And, kneeling, supplication make to our Lady de
la Paix;
What mournful sighs have here been heard, and,
when the voice was stopt
By sudden pangs, what bitter tears have on this
pavement dropt!

"Poor Shepherd of the naked Down, a favored
lot is thine,
Far happier lot, dear Boy, than brings full many
to this shrine;
From body pains and pains of soul thou needest
no release,
Thy hours as they flow on are spent, if not in joy,
in peace.

"Then offer up thy heart to God in thankfulness
and praise,
Give to him prayers, and many thoughts, in thy
most busy days;
And in his sight the fragile Cross, on thy small
hut, will be
Holy as that which long hath crowned the Chapel
of this Tree:

"Holy as that far seen which crowns the sumptuous
Church in Rome
Where thousands meet to worship God under a
mighty Dome;
He sees the bending multitude, he hears the choral
rites,
Yet not the less in children's hymns and lonely
prayer delights.

"God for his service needeth not proud work of
human skill;
They please him best who labor most to do in
peace his will:
So let us strive to live, and to our Spirits will be
given
Such wings as, when our Saviour calls, shall bear
us up to heaven."

The Boy no answer made by words, but, so earnest was his look,
Sleep fled, and with it fled the dream,—recorded
in this book,
Lest all that passed should melt away in silence
from my mind,
As visions still more bright have done, and left no
trace behind.

But oh! that countryman of thine, whose eye
loved Child, can see
A pledge of endless bliss in acts of early piety,

In verse, which to thy ear might come, would treat
this simple theme,
Nor leave untold our happy flight in that adven-
turous dream.

Alas! the dream, to thee, poor Boy! to thee from
whom it flowed,
Was nothing, scarcely can be aught, yet 't was
bounteously bestowed,
If I may dare to cherish hope that gentle eyes will
read
Not loth, and listening Little-ones, heart-touched,
their fancies feed.*

XX.

THE WESTMORELAND GIRL.

TO MY GRANDCHILDREN.

PART I.

SEEK who will delight in fable,
I shall tell you truth. A Lamb
Leapt from this steep bank to follow
'Cross the brook its thoughtless dam.

* See note.

Far and wide on hill and valley
Rain had fallen, unceasing rain,
And the bleating mother's Young-one
Struggled with the flood in vain:

But, as chanced, a Cottage-maiden,
(Ten years scarcely had she told,)
Seeing, plunged into the torrent,
Clasped the Lamb and kept her hold.

Whirled adown the rocky channel,
Sinking, rising, on they go,
Peace and rest, as seems, before them
Only in the lake below.

Oh! it was a frightful current
Whose fierce wrath the Girl had braved;
Clap your hands with joy, my Hearers,
Shout in triumph, both are saved; —

Saved by courage that with danger
Grew, by strength the gift of love,
And belike a guardian angel
Came with succor from above.

PART II.

Now, to a maturer Audience,
Let me speak of this brave Child,

Left among her native mountains
With wild Nature to run wild.

So, unwatched by love maternal,
Mother's care no more her guide,
Fared this little bright-eyed Orphan
Even while at her father's side.

Spare your blame,—remembrance makes him
Loth to rule by strict command;
Still upon his cheek are living
Touches of her infant hand,—

Dear caresses given in pity,
Sympathy that soothed his grief,
As the dying mother witnessed
To her thankful mind's relief.

Time passed on; the Child was happy,
Like a spirit of air she moved,
Wayward, yet by all who knew her
For her tender heart beloved.

Scarcely less than sacred passions,
Bred in house, in grove, and field,
Link her with the inferior creatures,
Urge her powers their rights to shield.

Anglers, bent on reckless pastime
Learn how she can feel alike

Both for tiny, harmless minnow
And the fierce and sharp-toothed pike.

Merciful protectress, kindling
Into anger or disdain,
Many a captive hath she rescued,
Others saved from lingering pain.

Listen yet awhile, — with patience
Hear the homely truths I tell, —
She in Grasmere's old church-steeple
Tolled this day the passing-bell.

Yes, the wild Girl of the mountains
To their echoes gave the sound,
Notice punctual as the minute,
Warning solemn and profound.

She, fulfilling her sire's office,
Rang alone the far-heard knell,
Tribute, by her hand, in sorrow,
Paid to One who loved her well.

When his spirit was departed,
On that service she went forth;
Nor will fail the like to render
When his corse is laid in earth.

What then wants the Child to temper,
In her breast, unruly fire,

To control the froward impulse
And restrain the vague desire?

Easily a pious training
And a steadfast outward power
Would supplant the weeds, and cherish,
In their stead, each opening flower

Thus the fearless Lamb-deliverer,
Woman-grown, meek-hearted, sage,
May become a blest example
For her sex, of every age.

Watchful as a wheeling eagle,
Constant as a soaring lark,
Should the country need a heroine,
She might prove our Maid of Arc.

Leave that thought; and here be uttered
Prayer that Grace divine may raise
Her humane, courageous spirit
Up to heaven, through peaceful ways.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS.

I.

THE BROTHERS.

"THESE Tourists, Heaven preserve us! needs must
live
A profitable life: some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as the summer lasted: some, as wise,
Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbor's corn.
But, for that moping Son of Idleness,
Why can he tarry *yonder?* — In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name, — only the turf we tread
And a few natural graves."

To Jane, his wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.

It was a July evening; and he sat
Upon the long stone seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage, — as it chanced, that day,
Employed in winter's work. Upon the stone
His wife sat near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards toothed with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who, in the open air, with due accord
Of busy hands and back-and-forward steps
Her large, round wheel was turning. Towards the field
In which the Parish Chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder: and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-white ridge
Of carded wool which the old man had piled
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other locked; and down the path
That from his cottage to the churchyard led
He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.

'T was one well known to him in former days,
A Shepherd-lad; who ere his sixteenth year
Had left that calling, tempted to intrust
His expectations to the fickle winds
And perilous waters; with the mariners
A fellow-mariner; — and so had fared

Through twenty seasons; but he had been reared
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees: — and, when the regular wind
Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line
Along the cloudless main, he, in those hours
Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze;
And, while the broad blue wave and sparkling foam
Flashed round him images and hues that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
Saw mountains; saw the forms of sheep that grazed
On verdant hills, — with dwellings among trees,
And shepherds clad in the same country gray
Which he himself had worn.*

And now, at last,
From perils manifold, with some small wealth

* This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, author of the Hurricane.

Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there; both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother-shepherds on their native hills.
— They were the last of all their race: and now,
When Leonard had approached his home, his heart
Failed in him; and, not venturing to inquire
Tidings of one so long and dearly loved,
He to the solitary churchyard turned,
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added. — He had found
Another grave, — near which a full half-hour
He had remained; but, as he gazed, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt, and even to hope
That he had seen this heap of turf before, —
That it was not another grave, but one
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walked
Through fields which once had been well known
to him:
And O what joy this recollection now
Sent to his heart! he lifted up his eyes,

And, looking round, imagined that he saw
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks
And everlasting hills themselves were changed.

By this the Priest, who down the field had come,
Unseen by Leonard, at the churchyard gate
Stopped short, — and thence, at leisure, limb by limb,
Perused him with a gay complacency.
Ay, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'T is one of those who needs must leave the path
Of the world's business to go wild alone:
His arms have a perpetual holiday;
The happy man will creep about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write fool upon his forehead. — Planted thus
Beneath a shed that overarched the gate
Of this rude churchyard, till the stars appeared
The good man might have communed with himself,
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
Approached; he recognized the Priest at once,
And, after greetings interchanged, and given
By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

Leonard. You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet life:

Your years make up one peaceful family;
And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
They cannot be remembered? Scarce a funeral
Comes to this churchyard once in eighteen months;
And yet some changes must take place among you:
And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks
Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our threescore years and ten
We are not all that perish. —— I remember,
(For many years ago I passed this road,)
There was a foot-way all along the fields
By the brook-side, — 't is gone! — and that dark cleft!
To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it had!

Priest. Nay, Sir, for aught I know
That chasm is much the same —

Leonard. But, surely, yonder —

Priest. Ay, there, indeed, your memory is a friend
That does not play you false. — On that tall pike
(It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
There were two springs which bubbled side by side,
As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other: the huge crag
Was rent with lightning, — one hath disappeared:
The other, left behind, is flowing still.
For accidents and changes such as these,
We want not store of them; — a water-spout

Will bring down half a mountain; — what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you,
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract! A sharp May storm
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens; or a shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks:
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge;
A wood is felled. And then for our own homes!
A child is born or christened, a field ploughed,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house-clock is decked with a new face,
And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries, — one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fireside. —
Yours was a stranger's judgment: for historians,
Commend me to these valleys!

Leonard. Yet your churchyard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
To say that you are heedless of the past:
An orphan could not find his mother's grave.
Here 's neither head nor foot-stone, plate of brass,
Cross-bones nor skull, — type of our earthly state
Nor emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
Is but a fellow to that pasture-field.

Priest. Why, there, Sir, is a thought that 's new to me!
The stone-cutters, 't is true, might beg their bread

If every English churchyard were like ours;
Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth
We have no need of names and epitaphs;
We talk about the dead by our firesides.
And then, for our immortal part! *we* want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.

Leonard. Your Dalesmen, then, do in each other's thoughts
Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?

Priest. For eightscore winters past,
With what I 've witnessed, and with what I 've heard,
Perhaps I might; and, on a winter evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there 's a grave,—your foot is half upon it,—
It looks just like the rest; and yet that man
Died broken-hearted.

Leonard. 'T is a common case.
We 'll take another: who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves?
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the churchyard wall.

Priest. That 's Walter Ewbank
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produced by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
Through five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage —
You see it yonder — and those few green fields.
They toiled and wrought, and still, from sire to son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before
A little. — yet a little, — and old Walter,
They left to him the family heart, and land
With other burdens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still kept up
A cheerful mind, — and buffeted with bond,
Interest, and mortgages ; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.
Poor Walter! whether it was care that spurred him
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale :
His pace was never that of an old man :
I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two grandsons after him. — But you,
Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel, — and on these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer —

Leonard. But those two Orphans !

Priest. Orphans ! — Such they were, —
Yet not while Walter lived : — for, though their parents

Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears,
Shed when he talked of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them. — If you weep, Sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred!
Ay, — you may turn that way, — it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.

Leonard. These boys, — I hope
They loved this good old man?

Priest. They did, — and truly:
But that was what we almost overlooked,
They were such darlings of each other. Yes,
Though from the cradle they had lived with Walter,
The only kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to both by reason of his age,
With a more fond, familiar tenderness,
They, notwithstanding, had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
Was two years taller: 't was a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them! — From their house the school
Is distant three short miles, and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every watercourse

And unbridged stream, such as you may have noticed
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swollen into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys remained
At home, go staggering through the slippery fords,
Bearing his brother on his back. I have seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Ay, more than once I have seen him, mid-leg deep
Their two books lying both on a dry stone,
Upon the hither side: and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety —

Leonard. It may be then —

Priest. Never did worthier lads break English bread;
The very brightest Sunday Autumn saw,
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep those boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of Sabbath breach.
Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks, and every hollow place
That venturous foot could reach, to one or both
Was known as well as to the flowers that grow there.
Like roebucks they went bounding o'er the hills;
They played like two young ravens on the crags
Then they could write, ay and speak too, as well

As many of their betters; — and for Leonard
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I 'd wager house and field
That, if he be alive, he has it yet.

Leonard. It seems, these brothers have not lived to be
A comfort to each other —

Priest. That they might
Live to such end is what both old and young
In this our valley all of us have wished,
And what, for my part, I have often prayed:
But Leonard —

Leonard. Then James still is left among you

Priest. 'T is of the elder brother I am speaking
They had an uncle; — he was at that time
A thriving man, and trafficked on the seas:
And, but for that same uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud:
For the boy loved the life which we lead here;
And though of unripe years, a stripling only,
His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent; when he died,
The estate and house were sold; and all their sheep
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years.
Well — all was gone, and they were destitute,
And Leonard, chiefly for his brother's sake,
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.

Twelve years are past since we had tidings from
him.
If there were one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
From the Great Gavel,* down by Leeza's banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a joyous festival;
And those two bells of ours, which there you see,
Hanging in the open air — But, O good Sir!
This is sad talk, — they 'll never sound for him,
Living or dead. — When last we heard of him,
He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary coast. — 'T was not a little
That would bring down his spirit; and no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the Youth
Was sadly crossed. — Poor Leonard! when we
parted,
He took me by the hand, and said to me,
If e'er he should grow rich, he would return,
To live in peace upon his father's land,
And lay his bones among us.
Leonard. If that day
Should come, 't would needs be a glad day for him;

* The Great Gavel, so called, I imagine, from its resemblance to the gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland Mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale.

The Leeza is a river which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale on issuing from the lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Lyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

He would himself, no doubt, be happy then
As any that should meet him —
Priest. Happy! Sir —
Leonard. You said his kindred all were in their graves,
And that he had one Brother —
Priest. That is but
A fellow-tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate;
And Leonard being always by his side
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a mountain-boy
In him was somewhat checked; and when his Brother
Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,
The little color that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek; he dropped, and pined, and pined —
Leonard. But these are all the graves of full-grown men!
Priest. Ay, Sir, that passed away: we took him to us;
He was the child of all the dale; — he lived
Three months with one, and six months with another;
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love:
And many, many happy days were his.
But, whether blithe or sad, 't is my belief
His absent Brother still was at his heart.
And when he dwelt beneath our roof, we found

(A practice till this time unknown to him)
That often, rising from his bed at night,
He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
He sought his brother Leonard. — You are moved
Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you,
I judged you most unkindly.
Leonard. But this Youth,
How did he die at last?
Priest. One sweet May-morning
(It will be twelve years since when Spring returns)
He had gone forth among the new-dropped lambs,
With two or three companions, whom their course
Of occupation led from height to height
Under a cloudless sun, — till he, at length,
Through weariness, or, haply, to indulge
The humor of the moment, lagged behind.
You see yon precipice; — it wears the shape
Of a vast building made of many crags;
And in the midst is one particular rock
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our shepherds it is called THE PILLAR
Upon its airy summit crowned with heath,
The loiterer, not unnoticed by his comrades,
Lay stretched at ease; but, passing by the place
On their return, they found that he was gone.
No ill was feared; till one of them by chance
Entering, when evening was far spent, the house
Which at that time was James's home, there learned
That nobody had seen him all that day:
The morning came, and still he was unheard of:

The neighbors were alarmed, and to the brook
Some hastened; some ran to the lake: ere noon
They found him at the foot of that same rock,
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after
I buried him, poor Youth, and there he lies!

Leonard. And that then *is* his grave! — Before his death
You say that he saw many happy years?

Priest. Ay, that he did —

Leonard. And all went well with him?

Priest. If he had one, the youth had twenty homes.

Leonard. And you believe, then, that his mind was easy?

Priest. Yes, long before he died, he found that time
Is a true friend to sorrow; and unless
His thoughts were turned on Leonard's luckless fortune,
He talked about him with a cheerful love.

Leonard. He could not come to an unhallowed end!

Priest. Nay, God forbid! — You recollect I mentioned
A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him; and we all conjectured
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
On the soft heath, and, waiting for his comrades,
He there had fallen asleep; that in his sleep
He to the margin of the precipice
Had walked, and from the summit had fallen headlong:

And so no doubt he perished. When the Youth
Fell, in his hand he must have grasp'd, we think,
His shepherd's staff; for on that Pillar of rock
It had been caught midway; and there for years
It hung; — and mouldered there.

The Priest here ended. —
The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt
A gushing from his heart, that took away
The power of speech. Both left the spot in silence·
And Leonard, when they reached the churchyard gate,
As the Priest lifted up the latch, turned round, —
And, looking at the grave, he said, "My Brother!"
The Vicar did not hear the words: and now,
He pointed towards his dwelling-place, entreating
That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
The other thanked him with an earnest voice;
But added, that, the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.

It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove
That overhung the road: he there stopped short,
And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed
All that the Priest had said: his early years
Were with him: his long absence, cherished hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
All pressed on him with such a weight, that now
This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed
A place in which he could not bear to live·

So he relinquished all his purposes.
He travelled back to Egremont: and thence,
That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest,
Reminding him of what had passed between them:
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart
He had not dared to tell him who he was.
This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a gray-headed Mariner.

1800.

II.

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE.

(SEE THE CHRONICLE OF GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH AND MILTON'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.)

WHERE be the temples which, in Britain's isle,
For his paternal Gods, the Trojan raised?
Gone like a morning dream, or like a pile
Of clouds that in cerulean ether blazed!
Ere Julius landed on her white-cliffed shore,
They sank, delivered o'er
To fatal dissolution; and, I ween,
No vestige then was left that such had ever been

Nathless, a British record (long concealed
In old Armorica, whose secret springs
No Gothic conqueror ever drank) revealed

The marvellous current of forgotten things;
How Brutus came, by oracles impelled,
And Albion's giants quelled,
A brood whom no civility could melt,
"Who never tasted grace, and goodness ne'er had felt."

By brave Corineus aided, he subdued,
And rooted out the intolerable kind;
And this too-long-polluted land imbued
With goodly arts and usages refined;
Whence golden harvests, cities, warlike towers,
And pleasure's sumptuous bowers;
Whence all the fixed delights of house and home,
Friendships that will not break, and love that cannot roam.

O happy Britain! region all too fair
For self-delighting fancy to endure
That silence only should inhabit there,
Wild beasts, or uncouth savages impure!
But, intermingled with the generous seed,
Grew many a poisonous weed;
Thus fares it still with all that takes its birth
From human care, or grows upon the breast of earth.

Hence, and how soon! that war of vengeance waged
By Guendolen against her faithless lord;
Till she, in jealous fury unassuaged,

Had slain his paramour with ruthless sword:
Then, into Severn hideously defiled,
She flung her blameless child,
Sabrina, — vowing that the stream should bear
That name through every age, her hatred to declare.

So speaks the Chronicle, and tells of Lear
By his ungrateful daughters turned adrift.
Ye lightnings, hear his voice! — they cannot hear,
Nor can the winds restore his simple gift.
But One there is, a Child of nature meek,
Who comes her Sire to seek;
And he, recovering sense, upon her breast
Leans smilingly, and sinks into a perfect rest.

There too we read of Spenser's fairy themes,
And those that Milton loved in youthful years;
The sage enchanter Merlin's subtle schemes;
The feats of Arthur and his knightly peers;
Of Arthur, — who, to upper light restored,
With that terrific sword
Which yet he brandishes for future war,
Shall lift his country's fame above the polar star

What wonder, then, if, in such ample field
Of old tradition, one particular flower
Doth seemingly in vain its fragrance yield,
And bloom unnoticed even to this late hour?
Now, gentle Muses, your assistance grant.

While I this flower transplant
Into a garden stored with Poesy;
Where flowers and herbs unite, and haply some
weeds be,
That, wanting not wild grace, are from all mischief
free!

A KING more worthy of respect and love
Than wise Gorbonian ruled not in his day;
And grateful Britain prospered far above
All neighboring countries through his righteous
sway;
He poured rewards and honors on the good;
The oppressor he withstood;
And while he served the Gods with reverence due,
Fields smiled, and temples rose, and towns and
cities grew.

He died, whom Artegal succeeds. — his son;
But how unworthy of that sire was he!
A hopeful reign, auspiciously begun,
Was darkened soon by foul iniquity.
From crime to crime he mounted, till at length
The nobles leagued their strength
With a vexed people, and the tyrant chased;
And on the vacant throne his worthier Brother
placed.

From realm to realm the humbled Exile went,
Suppliant for aid his kingdom to regain;

In many a court, and many a warrior's tent,
He urged his persevering suit in vain.
Him, in whose wretched heart ambition failed,
Dire poverty assailed:
And, tired with slights his pride no more could brook,
He towards his native country cast a longing look.

Fair blew the wished-for wind, — the voyage sped;
He landed; and, by many dangers scared,
"Poorly provided, poorly followèd,"
To Calaterium's forest he repaired.
How changed from him who, born to highest place,
Had swayed the royal mace,
Flattered and feared, despised yet deified,
In Troynovant, his seat by silver Thames's side!

From that wild region where the crownless King
Lay in concealment with his scanty train,
Supporting life by water from the spring,
And such chance food as outlaws can obtain,
Unto the few whom he esteems his friends
A messenger he sends;
And from their secret loyalty requires
Shelter and daily bread, — the sum of his desires.

While he the issue waits, at early morn
Wandering by stealth abroad, he chanced to hear
A startling outcry made by hound and horn,

From which the tusky wild boar flies in fear;
And, scouring toward him o'er the grassy plain,
Behold the hunter train!
He bids his little company advance
With seeming unconcern and steady countenance.

The royal Elidure, who leads the chase,
Hath checked his foaming courser: — Can it be!
Methinks that I should recognize that face,
Though much disguised by long adversity!
He gazed rejoicing, and again he gazed,
Confounded and amazed. —
"It is the king, my brother!" and, by sound
Of his own voice confirmed, he leaps upon the ground.

Long, strict, and tender was the embrace he gave,
Feebly returned by daunted Artegal;
Whose natural affection doubts enslave,
And apprehensions dark and criminal.
Loth to restrain the moving interview,
The attendant lords withdrew;
And, while they stood upon the plain apart,
Thus Elidure, by words, relieved his struggling heart.

"By heavenly Powers conducted, we have met;
— O Brother! to my knowledge lost so long,
But neither lost to love, nor to regret,
Nor to my wishes lost; — forgive the wrong,

(Such it may seem) if I thy crown have borne,
Thy royal mantle worn:
I was their natural guardian; and 't is just
That now I should restore what hath been held in
trust."

Awhile the astonished Artegal stood mute,
Then thus exclaimed: "To me, of titles shorn,
And stripped of power! me, feeble, destitute,
To me a kingdom! Spare the bitter scorn:
If justice ruled the breast of foreign kings,
Then, on the wide-spread wings
Of war, had I returned to claim my right;
This will I here avow, not dreading thy despite."

"I do not blame thee," Elidure replied;
"But, if my looks did with my words agree,
I should at once be trusted, not defied,
And thou from all disquietude be free.
May the unsullied Goddess of the chase,
Who to this blessed place
At this blest moment led me, if I speak
With insincere intent, on me her vengeance wreak!

"Were this same spear which in my hand I grasp
The British sceptre, here would I to thee
The symbol yield; and would undo this clasp,
If it confined the robe of sovereignty.
Odious to me the pomp of regal court,
And joyless sylvan sport,

While thou art roving, wretched and forlorn,
Thy couch the dewy earth, thy roof the forest
thorn!"

Then Artegal thus spake: "I only sought
Within this realm a place of safe retreat:
Beware of rousing an ambitious thought;
Beware of kindling hopes, for me unmeet
Thou art reputed wise, but in my mind
Art pitiably blind:
Full soon this generous purpose thou mayst rue,
When that which has been done no wishes can
undo.

"Who, when a crown is fixed upon his head,
Would balance claim with claim, and right with
right?
But thou — I know not how inspired, how led —
Wouldst change the course of things in all men's
sight!
And this for one who cannot imitate
Thy virtue, who may hate:
For, if, by such strange sacrifice restored,
He reign, thou still must be his king, and sovereign
lord;

"Lifted in magnanimity above
Aught that my feeble nature could perform,
Or even conceive; surpassing me in love
Far as in power the eagle doth the worm:

I, Brother! only should be king in name,
And govern to my shame;
A shadow in a hated land, while all
Of glad or willing service to thy share would fall."

"Believe it not," said Elidure; "respect
Awaits on virtuous life, and ever most
Attends on goodness with dominion decked,
Which stands the universal empire's boast;
This can thy own experience testify:
Nor shall thy foes deny
That, in the gracious opening of thy reign,
Our father's spirit seemed in thee to breathe again.

"And what if o'er that bright unbosoming
Clouds of disgrace and envious fortune passed!
Have we not seen the glories of the spring
By veil of noontide darkness overcast?
The frith that glittered like a warrior's shield,
The sky, the gay green field,
Are vanished; gladness ceases in the groves,
And trepidation strikes the blackened mountain-coves.

"But is that gloom dissolved? how passing clear
Seems the wide world, far brighter than before!
Even so thy latent worth will reappear,
Gladdening the people's heart from shore to shore;
For youthful faults ripe virtues shall atone;
Reseated on thy throne,

Proof shalt thou furnish that misfortune, pain,
And sorrow have confirmed thy native right to
reign.

"But, not to overlook what thou mayst know,
Thy enemies are neither weak nor few;
And circumspect must be our course, and slow,
Or from my purpose ruin may ensue.
Dismiss thy followers; — let them calmly wait
Such change in thy estate
As I already have in thought devised;
And which, with caution due, may soon be realized."

The story tells what courses were pursued,
Until King Elidure, with full consent
Of all his peers, before the multitude,
Rose, — and, to consummate this just intent,
Did place upon his brother's head the crown,
Relinquished by his own;
Then to his people cried, "Receive your lord,
Gorbonian's first-born son, your rightful king re-
stored!"

The people answered with a loud acclaim:
Yet more; — heart-smitten by the heroic deed,
The reinstated Artegal became
Earth's noblest penitent; from bondage freed
Of vice, — thenceforth unable to subvert
Or shake his high desert.
Long did he reign; and when he died, the tear
Of universal grief bedewed his honored bier.

Thus was a Brother by a Brother saved;
With whom a crown (temptation that hath set
Discord in hearts of men, till they have braved
Their nearest kin with deadly purpose met)
'Gainst duty weighed, and faithful love, did seem
A thing of no esteem;
And, from this triumph of affection pure,
He bore the lasting name of "pious Elidure"!

1815.

III.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

I'VE watched you now a full half-hour
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless! — not frozen seas
More motionless! — and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers:
Here rest your wings when they are weary,
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!

Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We 'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

1801

IV.

A FAREWELL.

FAREWELL, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare;
Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell! — we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And there will safely ride when we are gone;
The flowering shrubs that deck our humble door
Will prosper, though unattended and alone:
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none
These narrow bounds contain our private store

Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon;
Here are they in our sight, — we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell!
For two months now in vain we shall be sought;
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell!
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky Well.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear;
And she will prize this Bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, Building without peer!
— A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gatherèd,
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,
Will come to you; to you herself will wed;
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear Spot! which we have watched with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness registered and known;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle Place,
That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show
To them who look not daily on thy face;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
And sayst, when we forsake thee, "Let them go!'
Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell Her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best
Joy will be flown in its mortality;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast
Glittered at evening like a starry sky;
And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sang one song that will not die.

O happy Garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;
And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with Her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

1802

V.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET COPY OF THOMSON'S CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

WITHIN our happy Castle there dwelt One
Whom without blame I may not overlook;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took:
Here on his hours he hung as on a book;
On his own time here would he float away,
As doth a fly upon a summer brook;
But go to-morrow, or belike to-day,
Seek for him, — he is fled; and whither none can say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful home,
And find elsewhere his business or delight;
Out of our Valley's limits did he roam:
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighboring height:
Oft could we see him driving full in view
At midday when the sun was shining bright;
What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah! piteous sight it was to see this Man
When he came back to us, a withered flower, —

Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
Down would he sit: and without strength or power
Look at the common grass from hour to hour:
And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower.
Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay;
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was
Whenever from our Valley he withdrew;
For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.
Some thought he was a lover, and did woo:
Some thought far worse of him, and judged him wrong;
But verse was what he had been wedded to;
And his own mind did like a tempest strong
Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight along.

With him there often walked, in friendly guise,
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
A noticeable Man with large gray eyes,
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
As if a blooming face it ought to be;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe;
Yet some did think that he had little business here:

Sweet Heaven forefend! his was a lawful right;
Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;
His limbs would toss about him with delight,
Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.
Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care;
He would have taught you how you might employ
Yourself; and many did to him repair, —
And certes not in vain; he had inventions rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried:
Long blades of grass, plucked round him as he lay,
Made, to his ear attentively applied,
A pipe on which the wind would deftly play;
Glasses he had, that little things display,
The beetle panoplied in gems and gold,
A mailèd angel on a battle-day;
The mysteries that cups of flowers enfold,
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.

He would entice that other Man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery:
And, soon, these two were each to the other dear
No livelier love in such a place could be:
There did they dwell, — from earthly labor free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen;
If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly, sat down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a maiden queen.

1802.

VI.

LOUISA.

AFTER ACCOMPANYING HER ON A MOUNTAIN EXCURSION

I MET Louisa in the shade,
And, having seen that lovely maid,
Why should I fear to say
That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
And down the rocks can leap along
Like rivulets in May?

She loves her fire, her cottage home;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak;
And when against the wind she strains,
O might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek!

Take all that 's mine "beneath the moon,"
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls.

1801

VII.

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:

When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!

1799.

VIII.

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and oh!
The difference to me!

1799

IX.

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'T is past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

1799.

X.

ERE with cold beads of midnight dew
Had mingled tears of thine,
I grieve, fond youth! that thou shouldst sue
To haughty Geraldine.

Immovable by generous sighs,
  She glories in a train
Who drag, beneath our native skies,
  An Oriental chain.

Pine not like them with arms across,
  Forgetting in thy care
How the fast-rooted trees can toss
  Their branches in mid-air.

The humblest rivulet will take
  Its own wild liberties;
And, every day, the imprisoned lake
  Is flowing in the breeze.

Then, crouch no more on suppliant knee,
  But scorn with scorn outbrave;
A Briton, even in love, should be
  A subject, not a slave!

1826.

XI.

TO ——.

Look at the fate of summer flowers,
Which blow at daybreak, droop ere even-song;
And, grieved for their brief date, confess that ours,
Measured by what we are and ought to be,
Measured by all that, trembling, we foresee,
  Is not so long!

If human Life do pass away,
Perishing yet more swiftly than the flower,
If we are creatures of a *winter's* day;
What space hath Virgin's beauty to disclose
Her sweets and triumph o'er the breathing rose?
Not even an hour!

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
The happiest lovers Arcady might boast,
Could not the entrance of this thought forbid:
O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted Maid!
Nor rate too high what must so quickly fade,
So soon be lost.

Then shall love teach some virtuous Youth
"To draw, out of the object of his eyes,"
The while on thee they gaze in simple truth,
Hues more exalted, "a refinèd Form,"
That dreads not age, nor suffers from the worm,
And never dies.

1824.

XII.

THE FORSAKEN.

THE peace which others seek they find;
The heaviest storms not longest last;
Heaven grants even to the guiltiest mind
An amnesty for what is past;

When will my sentence be reversed?
I only pray to know the worst;
And wish as if my heart would burst.

O weary struggle! silent years
Tell seemingly no doubtful tale;
And yet they leave it short, and fears
And hopes are strong and will prevail.
My calmest faith escapes not pain;
And, feeling that the hope is vain,
I think that he will come again.

XIII.

'T is said, that some have died for love:
And here and there a churchyard grave is found
In the cold north's unhallowed ground,
Because the wretched man himself had slain,
His love was such a grievous pain.
And there is one whom I five years have known

He dwells alone
Upon Helvellyn's side:
He loved, — the pretty Barbara died;
And thus he makes his moan:
Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid
When thus his moan he made: —

"O move, thou Cottage, from behind that oak!
Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke
May mount into the sky!
The clouds pass on; they from the heavens depart:
I look, — the sky is empty space;
I know not what I trace;
But when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.

"O, what a weight is in these shades! Ye leaves,
That murmur once so dear, when will it cease?
Your sound my heart of rest bereaves,
It robs my heart of peace.
Thou Thrush, that singest loud — and loud and free,
Into yon row of willows flit,
Upon that alder sit;
Or sing another song, or choose another tree.

"Roll back, sweet Rill! back to thy mountain-bounds,
And there for ever be thy waters chained!
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustained;
If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
Headlong yon waterfall must come,
O let it then be dumb!
Be anything, sweet Rill, but that which thou art now.

Thou Eglantine, so bright with sunny showers,
Proud as a rainbow spanning half the vale,

Thou one fair shrub, O, shed thy flowers,
And stir not in the gale!
For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
Thus rise and thus descend,
Disturbs me till the sight is more than I can bear

The Man who makes this feverish complaint
Is one of giant stature, who could dance
Equipped from head to foot in iron mail.
Ah gentle Love! if ever thought was thine
To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
Turn from me, gentle Love! nor let me walk
Within the sound of Emma's voice, nor know
Such happiness as I have known to day.

1800

XIV.

A COMPLAINT.

THERE is a change, — and I am poor;
Your love hath been, nor long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow;
And flow it did; not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
Blest was I then all bliss above!

Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I? shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love, — it may be deep, —
I trust it is, — and never dry:
What matter? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
— Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

1806

XV.

TO ———.

Let other bards of angels sing,
Bright suns without a spot;
But thou art no such perfect thing:
Rejoice that thou art not!

Heed not though none should call thee fair;
So, Mary, let it be
If naught in loveliness compare
With what thou art to me.

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,
Whose veil is unremoved

Till heart with heart in concord beats,
And the lover is beloved.

1824

XVI.

YES! thou art fair, yet be not moved
To scorn the declaration,
That sometimes I in thee have loved
My fancy's own creation.

Imagination needs must stir;
Dear Maid, this truth believe,
Minds that have nothing to confer
Find little to perceive.

Be pleased that Nature made thee fit
To feed my heart's devotion,
By laws to which all forms submit,
In sky, air, earth, and ocean.

XVII.

How rich that forehead's calm expanse!
How bright that heaven-directed glance!
— Waft her to glory, wingèd Powers,
Ere sorrow be renewed,

And intercourse with mortal hours
Bring back a humbler mood!
So looked Cecilia when she drew
An angel from his station;
So looked; not ceasing to pursue
Her tuneful adoration!

But hand and voice alike are still;
No sound *here* sweeps away the will
That gave it birth: in service meek,
One upright arm sustains the cheek,
And one across the bosom lies —
That rose, and now forgets to rise,
Subdued by breathless harmonies
Of meditative feeling;
Mute strains from worlds beyond the skies,
Through the pure light of female eyes,
Their sanctity revealing!

1824

XVIII.

What heavenly smiles! O Lady mine,
Through my very heart they shine;
And, if my brow gives back their light,
Do thou look gladly on the sight;
As the clear Moon with modest pride
  Beholds her own bright beams
Reflected from the mountain's side
  And from the headlong streams.

XIX.

TO ——.

O DEARER far than light and life are dear,
Full oft our human foresight I deplore;
Trembling, through my unworthiness, with fear
That friends, by death disjoined, may meet no more!

Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control,
Mix with the day, and cross the hour of rest;
While all the future, for thy purer soul,
With "sober certainties" of love is blest.

That sigh of thine, not meant for human ear,
Tells that these words thy humbleness offend;
Yet bear me up, — else faltering in the rear
Of a steep march: support me to the end.

Peace settles where the intellect is meek,
And Love is dutiful in thought and deed;
Through Thee communion with that Love I seek:
The faith Heaven strengthens where *he* moulds the Creed.

1824.

XX.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

ON THE EVE OF A NEW YEAR.

I.

SMILE of the Moon! — for so I name
That silent greeting from above;
A gentle flash of light that came
From her whom drooping captives love;
Or art thou of still higher birth?
Thou that didst part the clouds of earth,
My torpor to rèprove!

II.

Bright boon of pitying Heaven! — alas!
I may not trust thy placid cheer,
Pondering that Time to-night will pass
The threshold of another year;
For years to me are sad and dull;
My very moments are too full
Of hopelessness and fear.

III.

And yet, the soul-awakening gleam,
That struck perchance the farthest cone
Of Scotland's rocky wilds, did seem
To visit me, and me alone;
Me, unapproached by any friend,

Save those who to my sorrows lend
Tears due unto their own.

IV.

To-night the church-tower bells will ring
Through these wide realms a festive peal;
To the new year a welcoming;
A tuneful offering for the weal
Of happy millions lulled in sleep;
While I am forced to watch and weep,
By wounds that may not heal.

V.

Born all too high, by wedlock raised
Still higher — to be cast thus low!
Would that mine eyes had never gazed
On aught of more ambitious show
Than the sweet flowerets of the fields!
— It is my royal state that yields
This bitterness of woe.

VI.

Yet how? — for I, if there be truth
In the world's voice, was passing fair
And beauty, for confiding youth,
Those shocks of passion can prepare
That kill the bloom before its time:
And blanch, without the owner's crime,
The most resplendent hair.

VII.

Unblest distinction! showered on me
To bind a lingering life in chains:
All that could quit my grasp, or flee,
Is gone; — but not the subtle stains
Fixed in the spirit; for even here
Can I be proud that jealous fear
Of what I was remains.

VIII.

A woman rules my prison's key;
A sister Queen, against the bent
Of law and holiest sympathy,
Detains me, doubtful of the event;
Great God, who feel'st for my distress,
My thoughts are all that I possess,
O keep them innocent!

IX.

Farewell desire of human aid,
Which abject mortals vainly court!
By friends deceived, by foes betrayed,
Of fears the prey, of hopes the sport;
Naught but the world-redeeming Cross
Is able to supply my loss,
My burden to support.

X.

Hark! the death-note of the year
Sounded by the castle clock!

From her sunk eyes a stagnant tear
Stole forth, unsettled by the shock;
But oft the woods renewed their green,
Ere the tired head of Scotland's Queen
Reposed upon the block!

1817

XXI.

THE COMPLAINT

OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN.

When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel, if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he be unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the desert; unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other tribes of Indians. The females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work, Hearne's Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean. In the high northern latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the northern lights vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise, as alluded to in the following poem.]

I.

Before I see another day,
O let my body die away!
In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
The stars, they were among my dreams;

In rustling conflict through the skies,
I heard, I saw the flashes drive,
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive;
Before I see another day,
O let my body die away!

II.

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain:
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie!
Alone, I cannot fear to die.

III.

Alas! ye might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon I yielded to despair;
Why did ye listen to my prayer?
When ye were gone my limbs were stronger;
And oh! how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
Dear friends, when ye were gone away.

IV.

My Child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran,
A most strange working did I see, —
As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me:
And then he stretched his arms, how wild
O mercy! like a helpless child.

V.

My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me
I feel I must have died with thee.
O wind, that o'er my head art flying
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send;
Too soon, my friends, ye went away;
For I had many things to say.

VI.

I 'll follow you across the snow;
Ye travel heavily and slow;
In spite of all my weary pain,
I 'll look upon your tents again.
— My fire is dead, and snowy white

The water which beside it stood:
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I;
Then wherefore should I fear to die?

VII.

Young as I am, my course is run,
I shall not see another sun;
I cannot lift my limbs to know
If they have any life or no.
My poor forsaken Child! if I
For once could have thee close to me,
With happy heart I then would die,
And my last thought would happy be;
But thou, dear Babe, art far away,
Nor shall I see another day.

1798

XXII.

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK.

I.

In distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads alone.

But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet:
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad;
And in his arms a Lamb he had.

II.

He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide:
And with his coat did then essay
To wipe those briny tears away.
I followed him, and said, "My friend,
What ails you? wherefore weep you so?"
— "Shame on me, Sir! this lusty Lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock:
He is the last of all my flock.

III.

"When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, an ewe I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year increased my store.

IV.

"Year after year my stock it grew;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As fine a flock as ever grazed!
Upon the Quantock hills they fed;
They throve, and we at home did thrive:
— This lusty Lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

V.

"Six children, Sir! had I to feed;
Hard labor in a time of need!
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the Parish asked relief.
They said I was a wealthy man;
My sheep upon the uplands fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread.
'Do this: how can we give to you,'
They cried, 'what to the poor is due?'

VI.

"I sold a sheep, as they have said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food;
For me, — it never did me good.
A woful time it was for me,

To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away, —
For me it was a woful day.

VII.

"Another still! and still another!
A little lamb, and then its mother!
It was a vein that never stopped, —
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.
Till thirty were not left alive,
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one;
And I may say, that many a time
I wished that all were gone, —
Reckless of what might come at last,
Were but the bitter struggle past.

VIII.

"To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies crossed my mind;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me:
No peace, no comfort, could I find,
No ease, within doors or without;
And crazily and wearily
I went my work about;
And oft was moved to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts roam.

IX.

"Sir! 't was a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.
Alas! it was an evil time;
God cursed me in my sore distress;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less;
And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away.

X.

"They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see!
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and a ewe;—
And then at last from three to two;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one:
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas! and I have none;—
To-day I fetched it from the rock;
It is the last of all my flock."

1798

XXIII.

REPENTANCE.

A PASTORAL BALLAD.

THE fields which with covetous spirit we sold,
Those beautiful fields, the delight of the day,
Would have brought us more good than a burden of gold,
Could we but have been as contented as they.

When the troublesome Tempter beset us, said I,
"Let him come, with his purse proudly grasped in his hand;
But, Allan, — be true to me, Allan, — we 'll die
Before he shall go with an inch of the land!"

There dwelt we, as happy as birds in their bowers,
Unfettered as bees that in gardens abide;
We could do what we liked with the land, it was ours,
And for us the brook murmured that ran by its side.

But now we are strangers, go early or late;
And often, like one overburdened with sin,
With my hand on the latch of the half-opened gate
I look at the fields, but I cannot go in!

When I walk by the hedge on a bright summer's
day,
Or sit in the shade of my grandfather's tree,
A stern face it puts on, as if ready to say,
"What ails you, that you must come creeping to
me!"

With our pastures about us, we could not be sad
Our comfort was near if we ever were crost;
But the comfort, the blessings, and wealth that we
had,
We slighted them all, — and our birthright was
lost.

O ill-judging sire of an innocent son,
Who must now be a wanderer! but peace to that
strain!
Think of evening's repose when our labor was
done,
The Sabbath's return; and its leisure's soft chain!

And in sickness, if night had been sparing of sleep,
How cheerful, at sunrise, the hill where I stood,
Looking down on the kine, and our treasure of
sheep
That besprinkled the field; 't was like youth in my
blood!

Now I cleave to the house, and am dull as a snail;
And, oftentimes, hear the church-bell with a sigh,

That follows the thought, We 've no land in the vale,
Save six feet of earth where our forefathers lie!

1804

XXIV.

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET —.

I.

Where art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou. worse to me than dead?
O find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same,
That I may rest, and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

II.

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

III.

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;

Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

IV.

Ah! little doth the young-one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares!
He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less.

V.

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought; and, being blind,
Said, "Pride shall help me in my wrong
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed": and that is true;
I 've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI.

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honor and of gain,
O do not dread thy mother's door!
Think not of me with grief and pain:
I now can see with better eyes;

And worldly grandeur I despise,
And Fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII.

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
They mount, — how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight!
Chains tie us down by land and sea;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men;
Or thou, upon a desert thrown,
Inheritest the lion's den;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

IX.

I look for ghosts; but none will force
Their way to me: 't is falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

x.

My apprehensions come in crowds;
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass:
I question things and do not find
One that will answer to my mind;
And all the world appears unkind.

xi.

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief:
If any chance to heave a sigh,
Then pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end;
I have no other earthly friend!

1804

XXV.

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT.

BY MY SISTER.

The days are cold, the nights are long,
The north wind sings a doleful song;
Then hush again upon my breast:
All merry things are now at rest,
Save thee, my pretty Love!

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
The crickets long have ceased their mirth
There 's nothing stirring in the house,
Save one *wee*, hungry, nibbling mouse:
Then why so busy thou?

Nay! start not at that sparkling light;
'T is but the moon that shines so bright
On the window-pane bedropped with rain.
Then, little Darling! sleep again,
And wake when it is day.

1801

XXVI.

MATERNAL GRIEF.

Departed Child! I could forget thee once,
Though at my bosom nursed; this woful gain
Thy dissolution brings, that in my soul
Is present and perpetually abides
A shadow, never, never to be displaced
By the returning substance, seen or touched,
Seen by mine eyes, or clasped in my embrace.
Absence and death how differ they! and how
Shall I admit that nothing can restore
What one short sigh so easily removed?
Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought, —

Assist me, God, their boundaries to know!
O teach me calm submission to thy Will!

The Child she mourned had overstepped the pale
Of Infancy, but still did breathe the air
That sanctifies its confines, and partook
Reflected beams of that celestial light
To all the Little-ones on sinful earth
Not unvouchsafed,— a light that warmed and cheered
Those several qualities of heart and mind
Which, in her own blest nature rooted deep,
Daily before the Mother's watchful eye,
And not hers only, their peculiar charms
Unfolded, — beauty, for its present self,
And for its promises to future years,
With not unfrequent rapture fondly hailed.

Have you espied upon a dewy lawn
A pair of Leverets each provoking each
To a continuance of their fearless sport,
Two separate creatures in their several gifts
Abounding, but so fashioned that, in all
That Nature prompts them to display, their looks
Their starts of motion, and their fits of rest,
An undistinguishable style appears
And character of gladness, as if Spring
Lodged in their innocent bosoms, and the spirit
Of the rejoicing morning were their own.

Such union, in the lovely Girl maintained
And her twin Brother, had the parent seen,
Ere, pouncing like a ravenous bird of prey,
Death in a moment parted them, and left
The Mother, in her turns of anguish, worse
Than desolate; for ofttimes from the sound
Of the survivor's sweetest voice, (dear child,
He knew it not!) and from his happiest looks,
Did she extract the food of self-reproach,
As one that lived ungrateful for the stay
By Heaven afforded to uphold her maimed
And tottering spirit. And full oft the Boy,
Now first acquainted with distress and grief,
Shrunk from his Mother's presence, shunned with fear
Her sad approach, and stole away to find,
In his known haunts of joy, where'er he might,
A more congenial object. But, as time
Softened her pangs and reconciled the child
To what he saw, he gradually returned,
Like a scared Bird encouraged to renew
A broken intercourse; and, while his eyes
Were yet with pensive fear and gentle awe
Turned upon her who bore him, she would stoop
To imprint a kiss that lacked not power to spread
Faint color over both their pallid cheeks,
And stilled his tremulous lip. Thus they were calmed
And cheered; and now together breathe fresh air
In open fields; and when the glare of day

Is gone, and twilight to the Mother's wish
Befriends the observance, readily they join
In walks whose boundary was the lost One's grave,
Which he with flowers hath planted, finding there
Amusement, where the Mother does not miss
Dear consolation, kneeling on the turf
In prayer, yet blending with that solemn rite
Of pious faith the vanities of grief;
For such, by pitying Angels and by Spirits
Transferred to regions upon which the cloud
Of our weak nature rest not, must be deemed
Those willing tears, and unforbidden sighs,
And all those tokens of a cherished sorrow,
Which, soothed and sweetened by the grace of Heaven,
As now it is, seems to her own fond heart
Immortal as the love that gave it being.

XXVII.

THE SAILOR'S MOTHER.

One morning (raw it was and wet,—
A foggy day in winter-time)
A Woman on the road I met,
Not old, though something past her prime:
Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
And like a Roman matron's was her mien and gait.

The ancient spirit is not dead;
Old times, thought I, are breathing there;
Proud was I that my country bred
Such strength, a dignity so fair:
She begged an alms, like one in poor estate;
I looked at her again, nor did my pride abate.

When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
"What is it," said I, "that you bear
Beneath the covert of your cloak,
Protected from this cold, damp air?"
She answered, soon as she the question heard,
"A simple burden, Sir, a little Singing-bird."

And, thus continuing, she said,
"I had a Son, who many a day
Sailed on the seas, but he is dead;
In Denmark he was cast away:
And I have travelled weary miles to see
If aught which he had owned might still remain for me.

"The bird and cage, they both were his:
'T was my Son's bird; and neat and trim
He kept it: many voyages
The singing-bird had gone with him;
When last he sailed, he left the bird behind,
From bodings, as might be, that hung upon his mind.

"He to a fellow-lodger's care
Had left it, to be watched and fed,
And pipe its song in safety; — there
I found it when my Son was dead;
And now, God help me for my little wit!
I bear it with me, Sir; — he took so much delight
in it."

1800.

XXVIII.

THE CHILDLESS FATHER.

"Up, Timothy, up with your staff and away!
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay;
The hare has just started from Hamilton's grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds."

— Of coats and of jackets gray, scarlet, and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colors were seen;
With their comely blue aprons, and caps white as
snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

Fresh sprigs of green box-wood, not six months
before,
Filled the funeral basin* at Timothy's door;

* In several parts of the North of England, when a funeral takes place, a basin full of sprigs of box-wood is placed at the door of the house from which the coffin is taken up, and each person who attends the funeral ordinarily takes a sprig of this box-wood, and throws it into the grave of the deceased.

A coffin through Timothy's threshold had past;
One Child did it bear, and that Child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray
The horse and the horn, and the hark! hark away
Old Timothy took up his staff, and he shut
With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said,
"The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead."
But of this in my ears not a word did he speak;
And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.

1800.

XXIX.

THE EMIGRANT MOTHER.

Once in a lonely hamlet I sojourned,
In which a Lady driven from France did dwell;
The big and lesser griefs with which she mourned,
In friendship she to me would often tell.

This Lady, dwelling upon British ground,
Where she was childless, daily would repair
To a poor neighboring cottage; as I found,
For sake of a young Child whose home was there

Once having seen her clasp with fond embrace
This Child, I chanted to myself a lay,
Endeavoring, in our English tongue, to trace
Such things as she unto the Babe might say:
And thus, from what I heard and knew, or guessed
My song the workings of her heart expressed.

I.

Dear Babe, thou daughter of another,
One moment let me be thy mother!
An infant's face and looks are thine,
And sure a mother's heart is mine;
Thy own dear mother 's far away,
At labor in the harvest field:
Thy little sister is at play;—
What warmth, what comfort would it yield
To my poor heart, if thou wouldst be
One little hour a child to me!

II.

Across the waters I am come,
And I have left a babe at home:
A long, long way of land and sea!
Come to me,—I 'm no enemy:
I am the same who at thy side
Sat yesterday, and made a nest
For thee, sweet Baby!—thou hast tried,
Thou know'st the pillow of my breast,
Good, good art thou:—alas! to me
Far more than I can be to thee.

III.

Here, little Darling, dost thou lie;
An infant thou, a mother I!
Mine wilt thou be, thou hast no fears;
Mine art thou — spite of these my tears.
Alas! before I left the spot,
My baby and its dwelling-place,
The nurse said to me, "Tears should not
Be shed upon an infant's face,
It was unlucky," - - no, no, no;
No truth is in them who say so!

IV.

My own dear Little-one, will sigh,
Sweet Babe! and they will let him die.
"He pines," they 'll say, "it is his doom,
And you may see his hour is come."
Oh! had he but thy cheerful smiles,
Limbs stout as thine, and lips as gay,
Thy looks, thy cunning, and thy wiles,
And countenance like a summer's day,
They would have hopes of him; — and then
I should behold his face again!

V.

'T is gone, — like dreams that we forget;
There was a smile or two; yet, yet
I can remember them, I see
The smiles, worth all the world to me.
Dear Baby! I must lay thee down;

Thou troublest me with strange alarms;
Smiles hast thou, bright ones of thy own;
I cannot keep thee in my arms;
For they confound me; — where — where is
That last, that sweetest smile of his?

VI.

O how I love thee! — we will stay
Together here this one half-day.
My sister's child, who bears my name,
From France to sheltering England came;
She with her mother crossed the sea;
The babe and mother near me dwell:
Yet does my yearning heart to thee
Turn rather, though I love her well:
Rest, little Stranger, rest thee here!
Never was any child more dear!

VII.

— I cannot help it; ill intent
I 've none, my pretty Innocent!
I weep, — I know they do thee wrong,
These tears — and my poor idle tongue.
O what a kiss was that! my cheek
How cold it is! but thou art good;
Thine eyes are on me, — they would speak,
I think, to help me if they could.
Blessings upon that soft, warm face!
My heart again is in its place!

VIII.

While thou art mine, my little Love,
This cannot be a sorrowful grove;
Contentment, hope, and mother's glee,
I seem to find them all in thee:
Here 's grass to play with, here are flowers
I 'll call thee by my darling's name;
Thou hast, I think, a look of ours,
Thy features seem to me the same;
His little sister thou shalt be;
And, when once more my home I see,
I 'll tell him many tales of thee.

1802.

XXX.

VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA.

The following tale was written as an episode, in a work from which its length may perhaps exclude it. The facts are true; no invention as to these has been exercised, as none was needed.

O HAPPY time of youthful lovers, (thus
My story may begin,) O balmy time,
In which a love-knot on a lady's brow
Is fairer than the fairest star in heaven!
To such inheritance of blessed fancy
(Fancy that sports more desperately with minds
Than ever fortune hath been known to do)

The high-born Vaudracour was brought, by years
Whose progress had a little overstepped
His stripling prime. A town of small repute,
Among the vine-clad mountains of Auvergne,
Was the Youth's birthplace. There he wooed a Maid
Who heard the heart-felt music of his suit
With answering vows. Plebeian was the stock,
Plebeian, though ingenuous, the stock,
From which her graces and her honors sprung:
And hence the father of the enamored Youth,
With haughty indignation, spurned the thought
Of such alliance. — From their cradles up,
With but a step between their several homes,
Twins had they been in pleasure; after strife
And petty quarrels, had grown fond again;
Each other's advocate, each other's stay;
And, in their happiest moments, not content,
If more divided than a sportive pair
Of sea-fowl, conscious both that they are hovering
Within the eddy of a common blast,
Or hidden only by the concave depth
Of neighboring billows from each other's sight.

Thus, not without concurrence of an age
Unknown to memory, was an earnest given
By ready nature for a life of love,
For endless constancy, and placid truth;
But whatsoe'er of such rare treasure lay
Reserved, had fate permitted, for support

Of their maturer years, his present mind
Was under fascination ; — he beheld
A vision, and adored the thing he saw.
Arabian fiction never filled the world
With half the wonders that were wrought for him
Earth breathed in one great presence of the spring
Life turned the meanest of her implements,
Before his eyes, to price above all gold ;
The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine ;
Her chamber-window did surpass in glory
The portals of the dawn ; all paradise
Could, by the simple opening of a door,
Let itself in upon him : — pathways, walks,
Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit sank,
Surcharged, within him, overblest to move
Beneath a sun that wakes a weary world
To its dull round of ordinary cares ;
A man too happy for mortality !

So passed the time, till, whether through effect
Of some unguarded moment that dissolved
Virtuous restraint — ah, speak it, think it not !
Deem rather that the fervent Youth, who saw
So many bars between his present state
And the dear haven where he wished to be
In honorable wedlock with his Love,
Was in his judgment tempted to decline
To perilous weakness, and intrust his cause
To nature for a happy end of all ;
Deem that by such fond hope the Youth was swayed

And bear with their transgression, when I add
That Julia, wanting yet the name of wife,
Carried about her for a secret grief
The promise of a mother.
To conceal
The threatened shame, the parents of the Maid
Found means to hurry her away by night,
And unforewarned, that in some distant spot
She might remain shrouded in privacy,
Until the babe was born. When morning came,
The Lover, thus bereft, stung with his loss,
And all uncertain whither he should turn,
Chafed like a wild beast in the toils; but soon
Discovering traces of the fugitives,
Their steps he followed to the Maid's retreat.
Easily may the sequel be divined, —
Walks to and fro, — watchings at every hour;
And the fair Captive, who, whene'er she may,
Is busy at her casement as the swallow
Fluttering its pinions, almost within reach,
About the pendent nest, did thus espy
Her Lover! — thence a stolen interview,
Accomplished under friendly shade of night.

I pass the raptures of the pair; — such theme
Is, by innumerable poets, touched
In more delightful verse than skill of mine
Could fashion; chiefly by that darling bard
Who told of Juliet and her Romeo,
And of the lark's note heard before its time,

And of the streaks that laced the severing clouds
In the unrelenting east. — Through all her courts
The vacant city slept; the busy winds,
That keep no certain intervals of rest,
Moved not; meanwhile the galaxy displayed
Her fires, that like mysterious pulses beat
Aloft; — momentous but uneasy bliss!
To their full hearts the universe seemed hung
On that brief meeting's slender filament!

They parted; and the generous Vaudracour
Reached speedily the native threshold, bent
On making (so the Lovers had agreed)
A sacrifice of birthright to attain
A final portion from his father's hand;
Which granted, Bride and Bridegroom then would flee
To some remote and solitary place,
Shady as night, and beautiful as heaven,
Where they may live, with no one to behold
Their happiness, or to disturb their love.
But *now* of this no whisper; not the less,
If ever an obtrusive word were dropped
Touching the matter of his passion, still,
In his stern father's hearing, Vaudracour
Persisted openly that death alone
Should abrogate his human privilege
Divine, of swearing everlasting truth,
Upon the altar, to the Maid he loved.

"You shall be baffled in your mad intent
If there be justice in the Court of France,"
Muttered the Father. — From these words the Youth
Conceived a terror; and, by night or day,
Stirred nowhere without weapons, that full soon
Found dreadful provocation: for at night,
When to his chamber he retired, attempt
Was made to seize him by three armèd men,
Acting, in furtherance of the father's will,
Under a private signet of the State.
One the rash Youth's ungovernable hand
Slew, and as quickly to a second gave
A perilous wound. He shuddered to behold
The breathless corse; then peacefully resigned
His person to the law, was lodged in prison,
And wore the fetters of a criminal.

Have you observed a tuft of wingèd seed,
That, from the dandelion's naked stalk,
Mounted aloft, is suffered not to use
Its natural gifts for purposes of rest,
Driven by the autumnal whirlwind to and fro
Through the wide element? or have you marked
The heavier substance of a leaf-clad bough,
Within the vortex of a foaming flood,
Tormented? By such aid you may conceive
The perturbation that ensued; — ah, no!
Desperate the Maid, — the Youth is stained with blood;

Unmatchable on earth is their disquiet!
Yet as the troubled seed and tortured bough
Is Man, subjected to despotic sway.

For him, by private influence with the Court,
Was pardon gained, and liberty procured;
But not without exaction of a pledge,
Which liberty and love dispersed in air.
He flew to her from whom they would divide him;—
He clove to her who could not give him peace;—
Yea, his first word of greeting was, "All right
Is gone from me; my lately towering hopes,
To the least fibre of their lowest root,
Are withered; thou no longer canst be mine,
I thine;— the conscience-stricken must not woo
The unruffled Innocent. I see thy face,
Behold thee, and my misery is complete!"

"One, are we not?" exclaimed the Maiden;—
"One,
For innocence and youth, for weal and woe?"
Then with the father's name she coupled words
Of vehement indignation; but the Youth
Checked her with filial meekness; for no thought
Uncharitable crossed his mind, no sense
Of hasty anger, rising in the eclipse
Of true domestic loyalty, did e'er
Find place within his bosom. — Once again
The persevering wedge of tyranny
Achieved their separation: and once more

Were they united, — to be yet again
Disparted, pitiable lot! But here
A portion of the tale may well be left
In silence, though my memory could add
Much how the Youth, in scanty space of time,
Was traversed from without; much, too, of thought
That occupied his days in solitude,
Under privation and restraint; and what,
Through dark and shapeless fear of things to come,
And what, through strong compunction for the past,
He suffered, — breaking down in heart and mind!

Doomed to a third and last captivity,
His freedom he recovered on the eve
Of Julia's travail. When the babe was born,
Its presence tempted him to cherish schemes
Of future happiness. "You shall return,
Julia," said he, "and to your father's house
Go with the child. — You have been wretched; yet
The silver shower, whose reckless burden weighs
Too heavily upon the lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.
Malice, beholding you, will melt away.
Go! — 't is a town where both of us were born;
None will reproach you, for our truth is known;
And if, amid those once-bright bowers, our fate
Remain unpitied, pity is not in man.
With ornaments — the prettiest nature yields
Or art can fashion — shall you deck our boy,
And feed his countenance with your own sweet looks

Till no one can resist him. — Now, even now,
I see him sporting on the sunny lawn;
My father from the window sees him too;
Startled, as if some new-created thing
Enriched the earth, or Faery of the woods
Bounded before him; — but the unweeting Child
Shall by his beauty win his grandsire's heart
So that it shall be softened, and our loves
End happily, as they began!"

These gleams
Appeared but seldom; oftener was he seen
Propping a pale and melancholy face
Upon the Mother's bosom; resting thus
His head upon one breast, while from the other
The Babe was drawing in its quiet food.
— That pillow is no longer to be thine,
Fond Youth! that mournful solace now must pass
Into the list of things that cannot be!
Unwedded Julia, terror-smitten, hears
The sentence, by her mother's lip pronounced,
That dooms her to a convent. — Who shall tell,
Who dares report, the tidings to the lord
Of her affections? So they blindly asked,
Who knew not to what quiet depths a weight
Of agony had pressed the Sufferer down:
The word, by others dreaded, he can hear
Composed and silent, without visible sign
Of even the least emotion. Noting this,
When the impatient object of his love
Upbraided him with slackness, he returned

No answer, only took the mother's hand
And kissed it; seemingly devoid of pain,
Or care, that what so tenderly he pressed
Was a dependent on the obdurate heart
Of one who came to disunite their lives
For ever, — sad alternative! preferred,
By the unbending parents of the Maid,
To secret 'spousals meanly disavowed.
— So be it!
In the city he remained
A season after Julia had withdrawn
To those religious walls. He, too, departs; —
Who with him? — even the senseless Little-one.
With that sole charge he passed the city-gates,
For the last time, attendant by the side
Of a close chair, a litter, or sedan,
In which the Babe was carried. To a hill,
That rose a brief league distant from the town,
The dwellers in that house where he had lodged
Accompanied his steps, by anxious love
Impelled; — they parted from him there, and
stood
Watching below, till he had disappeared
On the hill-top. His eyes he scarcely took,
Throughout that journey, from the vehicle
(Slow-moving ark of all his hopes!) that veiled
The tender infant: and at every inn,
And under every hospitable tree
At which the bearers halted or reposed,
Laid him with timid care upon his knees.

And looked, as mothers ne'er were known to look
Upon the nurstling which his arms embraced.

This was the manner in which Vaudracour
Departed with his infant; and thus reached
His father's house, where to the innocent child
Admittance was denied. The young man spake
No word of indignation or reproof,
But of his father begged, a last request,
That a retreat might be assigned to him
Where in forgotten quiet he might dwell,
With such allowance as his wants required;
For wishes he had none. To a lodge that stood
Deep in a forest, with leave given, at the age
Of four-and-twenty summers he withdrew;
And thither took with him his motherless Babe,
And one domestic for their common needs,
An aged woman. It consoled him here
To attend upon the orphan, and perform
Obsequious service to the precious child,
Which, after a short time, by some mistake
Or indiscretion of the Father, died. —
The Tale I follow to its last recess
Of suffering or of peace, I know not which:
Theirs be the blame who caused the woe, not mine!

From this time forth he never shared a smile
With mortal creature. An inhabitant
Of that same town, in which the pair had left

So lively a remembrance of their griefs,
By chance of business coming within reach
Of his retirement, to the forest lodge
Repaired, but only found the matron there,
Who told him that his pains were thrown away,
For that her master never uttered word
To living thing, — not even to her. — Behold!
While they were speaking, Vaudracour approached;
But, seeing some one near, as on the latch
Of the garden-gate his hand was laid, he shrunk, —
And, like a shadow, glided out of view.
Shocked at his savage aspect, from the place
The visitor retired.
Thus lived the Youth,
Cut off from all intelligence with man,
And shunning even the light of common day;
Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through
France
Full speedily resounded, public hope,
Or personal memory of his own deep wrongs,
Rouse him: but in those solitary shades
His days he wasted, an imbecile mind!

1805

XXXI.

THE IDIOT BOY.

'T is eight o'clock, — a clear March night,
The moon is up, — the sky is blue,
The owlet, in the moonlight air,
Shouts from nobody knows where;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo! halloo! a long halloo!

— Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy?
Why are you in this mighty fret?
And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your Idiot Boy?

Scarcely a soul is out of bed;
Good Betty, put him down again;
His lips with joy they burr at you;
But, Betty! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein?

But Betty 's bent on her intent;
For her good neighbor, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail.

There 's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress;
Old Susan lies a-bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband 's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale;
There 's none to help poor Susan Gale;
What must be done? what will betide?

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her Pony, that is mild and good;
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing fagots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim, —
And, by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has on the well-girt saddle set
(The like was never heard of yet)
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge and through the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand;
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a *hurly-burly* now
He shakes the green bough in his hand

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The Boy, who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
Was, "Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all, —
Come home again, whate'er befall,
My Johnny, do, I pray you do."

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head and with his hand,
And proudly shook the bridle too;
And then! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty 's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the Pony's side,
On which her Idiot Boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the Pony moved his legs,
O then for the poor Idiot Boy!
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He 's idle all for very joy.

And while the Pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left hand you may see
The green bough motionless and dead
The moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That till full fifty yards were gone
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship:
O happy, happy, happy John!

And while the Mother, at the door,
Stands fixed, her face with joy o'erflows;
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim,
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her Idiot Boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart!
He 's at the guide-post, — he turns right;
She watches till he 's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr, — now Johnny's lips they burr
As loud as any mill, or near it;
Meek as a lamb the Pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale:
Her Messenger 's in merry tune;
The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
As on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree;
For of this Pony there 's a rumor,
That, should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years,
He never will be out of humor.

But then he is a horse that thinks!
And when he thinks, his pace is slack;
Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet, for his life, he cannot tell
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What speedy help her Boy will bring,
With many a most diverting thing,
Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory.

And Betty, still at Susan's side,
By this time is not quite so flurried;
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well;
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears,
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
"As sure as there 's a moon in heaven,"
Cries Betty, "he 'll be back again;
They 'll both be here, — 't is almost ten, —
Both will be here before eleven."

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
The clock gives warning for eleven;
'T is on the stroke; — "He must be near,"
Quoth Betty, "and will soon be here,
As sure as there 's a moon in heaven."

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Johnny is not yet in sight:
— The moon 's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease;
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast:
"A little idle sauntering Thing!"
With other names, an endless string;
But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty 's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
"How can it be he is so late?
The Doctor, he has made him wait;
Susan! they 'll both be here anon."

And Susan 's growing worse and worse,
And Betty 's in a sad *quandary;*
And then there 's nobody to say
If she must go, or she must stay!
— She 's in a sad *quandary.*

The clock is on the stroke of one;
But neither Doctor nor his Guide
Appears along the moonlight road;
There 's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty 's still at Susan's side.

And Susan now begins to fear
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drowned;
Or lost, perhaps, and never found;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With " God forbid it should be true!"
At the first word that Susan said,
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
" Susan, I 'd gladly stay with you.

" I must be gone, I must away:
Consider, Johnny 's but half-wise;
Susan, we must take care of him,
If he is hurt in life or limb —"
" O God forbid!" poor Susan cries.

" What can I do?" says Betty, going,
" What can I do to ease your pain?
Good Susan tell me, and I 'll stay;
I fear you 're in a dreadful way,
But I shall soon be back again."

"Nay, Betty, go! good Betty, go!
There 's nothing that can ease my pain."
Then off she hies; but with a prayer
That God poor Susan's life would spare,
Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale;
And how she ran, and how she walked,
And all that to herself she talked,
Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower, was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green;
'T was Johnny, Johnny, everywhere.

And while she crossed the bridge, there came
A thought with which her heart is sore, —
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon within the brook,
And never will be heard of more.

Now is she high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There 's neither Johnny nor his horse
Among the fern or in the gorse;
There 's neither Doctor nor his Guide.

"O saints! what is become of him?
Perhaps he 's climbed into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or, sadly he has been misled,
And joined the wandering gypsy-folk.

"Or him that wicked Pony 's carried
To the dark cave, the goblin's hall;
Or in the castle he 's pursuing
Among the ghosts his own undoing;
Or playing with the waterfall."

At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away:
"If Susan had not been so ill,
Alas! I should have had him still,
My Johnny, till my dying day."

Poor Betty, in this sad distemper,
The Doctor's self could hardly spare:
Unworthy things she talked, and wild;
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The Pony, had his share.

But now she 's fairly in the town,
And to the Doctor's door she hies:
'T is silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she 's at the Doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap;
The Doctor at the casement shows
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze!
And one hand rubs his old nightcap.

"O Doctor! Doctor! where 's my Johnny?
"I 'm here, what is 't you want with me?"
"O Sir! you know I 'm Betty Foy,
And I have lost my poor dear Boy,
You know him, — him you often see;

"He 's not so wise as some folks be — "
"The devil take his wisdom!" said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
"What, Woman! should I know of him?"
And. grumbling, he went back to bed!

"O woe is me! O woe is me!
Here will I die; here will I die;
I thought to find my lost one here,
But he is neither far nor near;
O what a wretched mother I!"

She stops, she stands, she looks about;
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty, it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again.
— The clock strikes three, — a dismal knell

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail;
This piteous news so much it shocked her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she 's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road:
"O cruel! I 'm almost threescore;
Such night as this was ne'er before,
There 's not a single soul abroad."

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now, if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers! yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin;
A green-grown pond she just has past,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
Such tears she never shed before:
"O dear, dear Pony! my sweet joy!
O carry back my Idiot Boy!
And we will ne'er o'erload thee more."

A thought is come into her head:
The Pony he is mild and good,
And we have always used him well;
Perhaps he 's gone along the dell,
And carried Johnny to the wood.

Then up she springs as if on wings;
She thinks no more of deadly sin;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be
To drown herself therein.

O Reader! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his Horse are doing!
What they 've been doing all this time.
O could I put it into rhyme,
A most delightful tale pursuing!

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
He with his Pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he 's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
All silent as a horseman-ghost,
He travels slowly down the vale.

And now, perhaps, is hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he;
Yon valley, now so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be!

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He 's galloping away, away,
And so will gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil!

I to the Muses have been bound
These fourteen years, by strong indentures:
O gentle Muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befell;
He surely met with strange adventures.

O gentle Muses! is this kind?
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me,
Ye Muses! whom I love so well?

Who 's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse?

Unto his horse, — there feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read:
— 'T is Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

And that 's the very Pony, too!
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring waterfall she hears,
And cannot find her Idiot Boy.

Your Pony 's worth his weight in gold:
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She 's coming from among the trees,
And now all full in view she sees
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And Betty sees the Pony too:
Why stand you thus, good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 't is no ghost,
'T is he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your Idiot Boy.

She looks again — her arms are up —
She screams — she cannot move for joy;
She darts, as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the horse,
And fast she holds her Idiot Boy.

And Johnny burrs, and laughs aloud;
Whether in cunning or in joy
I cannot tell; but while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

And now she 's at the Pony's tail,
And now is at the Pony's head, —
On that side now, and now on this;
And, almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy;
She 's happy here, is happy there,
She is uneasy everywhere;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the Pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
The little Pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

"O Johnny! never mind the Doctor;
You 've done your best, and that is all":
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turned the Pony's head
From the loud waterfall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The Pony, Betty, and her Boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale;
And who is she, betimes abroad,
That hobbles up the steep, rough road?
Who is it, but old Susan Gale?

Long time lay Susan lost in thought;
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her Messenger and Nurse;
And, as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body — it grew better.

She turned, she tossed herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And, while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

"Alas! what is become of them?
These fears can never be endured;
I 'll to the wood." — The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she goes, up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come;
She spies her friends, she shouts a greeting;
O me! it is a merry meeting
As ever was in Christendom.

The owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four travellers homeward wend;
The owls have hooted all night long,
And with the owls began my song,
And with the owls must end.

For while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, "Tell us, Johnny, do,
Where all this long night you have been,
What you have heard, what you have seen
And, Johnny, mind you tell us true."

Now Johnny all night long had heard
The owls in tuneful concert strive;
No doubt too he the moon had seen;
For in the moonlight he had been
From eight o'clock till five.

And thus to Betty's question he
Made answer, like a traveller bold.
(His very words I give to you,)
"The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
And the moon did shine so cold!"
— Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
And that was all his travel's story.

1798.

XXXII.

MICHAEL.

A PASTORAL POEM.

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook

Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story, — unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; — not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grassmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,

And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who would suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honorable gain;
Those fields, those hills — what could they less
— had laid

Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old,
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old, — in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then
Their labor did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That, in our ancient uncouth country style,
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim, the Housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn, and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sat,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighborhood,
And was a public symbol of the life

That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the house itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING
STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear, —
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all,
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sat with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE,* a name which yet it bears
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,

* Clipping is the word used in the North of England for hearing.

And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt,
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hinderance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though naught was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations, — things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time

Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this

Had been no sorrow. I forgive him; — but
'T were better to be dumb than to talk thus.

"When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman, — he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade, — and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor
What can be gained?"
At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There 's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself;
He was a parish-boy; at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors bought
A basket, which they filled with peddler's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,

And left estates and moneys to the poor,
And at his birthplace built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed: — "Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
We have enough; — I wish indeed that I
Were younger; — but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
— If he *could* go, the boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go
We have no other Child but thee to lose,

None to remember; — do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and altogether sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard

The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And as soon as he had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him: — "My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 't will do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of. — — After thou
First cam'st into the world, — as oft befalls
To new-born infants, — thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own hireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed,
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills

As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand
And said, "Nay, do not take it so; — I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
— Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived:
But 't is a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burdened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
— It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go."
At this the old Man paused

Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But lay one stone,—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so; yes—yes—
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us!—But I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
Mayst bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well

When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'T will be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
— Hushed was that house in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell: — with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news.
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again

The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'T will make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'T is not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man, — and 't is believed by all,
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of the Sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR
Is gone, — the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighborhood: — yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

1800.

XXXIII.

THE WIDOW ON WINDERMERE SIDE.

I.

How beautiful when up a lofty height
Honor ascends among the humblest poor,
And feeling sinks as deep! See there the door
Of one, a Widow, left beneath a weight
Of blameless debt. On evil Fortune's spite

She wasted no complaint, but strove to make
A just repayment, both for conscience' sake
And that herself and hers should stand upright
In the world's eye. Her work when daylight failed
Paused not, and through the depth of night she kept
Such earnest vigils, that belief prevailed
With some, the noble creature never slept;
But, one by one, the hand of death assailed
Her children from her inmost heart bewept.

II.

The Mother mourned, nor ceased her tears to flow
Till a winter's noonday placed her buried Son
Before her eyes, last child of many gone, —
His raiment of angelic white, and lo!
His very feet bright as the dazzling snow
Which they are touching; yea, far brighter, even
As that which comes, or seems to come, from heaven,
Surpasses aught these elements can show.
Much she rejoiced, trusting that from that hour,
Whate'er befell, she could not grieve or pine;
But the Transfigured, in and out of season,
Appeared, and spiritual presence gained a power
Over material forms that mastered reason.
O gracious Heaven, in pity make her thine!

III.

But why that prayer? as if to her could come
No good but by the way that leads to bliss
Thro' Death, — so judging we should judge amiss

Since reason failed, want is her threatened doom,
Yet frequent transports mitigate the gloom:
Nor of those maniacs is she one that kiss
The air or laugh upon a precipice;
No, passing through strange sufferings toward the tomb,
She smiles as if a martyr's crown were won:
Oft, when light breaks through clouds or waving trees,
With outspread arms, and fallen upon her knees,
The Mother hails in her descending Son
An Angel, and in earthly ecstasies
Her own angelic glory seems begun.

XXXIV

THE ARMENIAN LADY'S LOVE

The subject of the following poem is from the Orlandus of the author's friend, Kenelm Henry Digby: and the liberty is taken of inscribing it to him as an acknowledgment, however unworthy, of pleasure and instruction derived from his numerous and valuable writings, illustrative of the piety and chivalry of the olden time.]

I.

You have heard "a Spanish Lady
How she wooed an Englishman":*

* See, in Percy's Reliques, that fine old ballad, "The Spanish Lady's Love"; from which poem the form of stanza, as suitable to dialogue, is adopted.

Hear now of a fair Armenian,
Daughter of the proud Soldàn;
How she loved a Christian Slave, and told her pain
By word, look, deed, with hope that he might love again.

II.

"Pluck that rose, it moves my liking,"
Said she, lifting up her veil;
"Pluck it for me, gentle gardener,
Ere it wither and grow pale."
"Princess fair, I till the ground, but may not take
From twig or bed an humble flower, even for your sake!"

III.

"Grieved am I, submissive Christian!
To behold thy captive state;
Women in your land may pity
(May they not?) the unfortunate."
"Yes, kind Lady! otherwise man could not bear
Life, which to every one that breathes is full of care."

IV.

"Worse than idle is compassion
If it end in tears and sighs;
Thee from bondage would I rescue,
And from vile indignities:
Nurtured, as thy mien bespeaks, in high degree,
Look up, and help a hand that longs to set thee free."

V.

"Lady! dread the wish, nor venture
In such peril to engage;
Think how it would stir against you
Your most loving father's rage:
Sad deliverance would it be, and yoked with shame,
Should troubles overflow on her from whom it came."

VI.

"Generous Frank! the just in effort
Are of inward peace secure:
Hardships for the brave encountered,
Even the feeblest may endure:
If almighty grace through me thy chains unbind
My father for slave's work may seek a slave in mind."

VII.

"Princess, at this burst of goodness,
My long-frozen heart grows warm!"
"Yet you make all courage fruitless,
Me to save from chance of harm:
Leading such companion, I that gilded dome,
Yon minarets, would gladly leave for his worst home."

VIII.

"Feeling tunes your voice, fair Princess!
And your brow is free from scorn,

Else these words would come like mockery,
Sharper than the pointed thorn."
"Whence the undeserved mistrust? Too wide apart
Our faith hath been, — O would that eyes could
see the heart!"

IX.

"Tempt me not, I pray; my doom is
These base implements to wield;
Rusty lance, I ne'er shall grasp thee,
Ne'er assoil my cobwebb'd shield!
Never see my native land, nor castle towers,
Nor her who thinking of me there counts widowed
hours."

X.

"Prisoner! pardon youthful fancies;
Wedded? If you *can*, say no!
Blessed is and be your consort;
Hopes I cherished, — let them go!
Handmaid's privilege would leave my purpose free
Without another link to my felicity."

XI.

"Wedded love with loyal Christians,
Lady, is a mystery rare;
Body, heart, and soul in union,
Make one being of a pair."
'Humble love in me would look for no return,
Soft as a guiding star that cheers, but cannot burn.

XII.

"Gracious Allah! by such title
Do I dare to thank the God,
Him who thus exalts thy spirit,
Flower of an unchristian sod!
Or hast thou put off wings which thou in heaven
dost wear?
What have I seen, and heard, or dreamt? where
am I? where?"

XIII.

Here broke off the dangerous converse:
Less impassioned words might tell
How the pair escaped together,
Tears not wanting, nor a knell
Of sorrow in her heart, while thro' her father's door,
And from her narrow world, she passed for ever-
more.

XIV.

But affections higher, holier,
Urged her steps; she shrunk from trust
In a sensual creed, that trampled
Woman's birthright into dust.
Little be the wonder then, the blame be none,
If she, a timid Maid, hath put such boldness on.

XV.

Judge both Fugitives with knowledge:
In those old romantic days

Mighty were the soul's commandments
To support, restrain, or raise.
Foes might hang upon their path, snakes rustle near,
But nothing from their inward selves had they to fear.

XVI.

Thought infirm ne'er came between them,
Whether printing desert sands
With accordant steps, or gathering
Forest-fruit with social hands;
Or whispering like two reeds that in the cold moon-beam
Bend with the breeze their heads, beside a crystal stream.

XVII.

On a friendly deck reposing,
They at length for Venice steer;
There, when they had closed their voyage,
One, who daily on the pier
Watched for tidings from the East beheld his lord,
Fell down and clasped his knees for joy, not uttering word.

XVIII.

Mutual was the sudden transport;
Breathless questions followed fast,

Years contracting to a moment,
Each word greedier than the last;
"Hie thee to the Countess, friend! return with speed,
And of this Stranger speak, by whom her lord was freed.

XIX.

"Say that I, who might have languished,
Drooped, and pined till life was spent,
Now before the gates of Stolberg
My Deliverer would present
For a crowning recompense, the precious grace
Of her who in my heart still holds her ancient place.

XX.

"Make it known that my Companion
Is of royal Eastern blood,
Thirsting after all perfection,
Innocent, and meek, and good,
Though with misbelievers bred; but that dark night
Will holy Church disperse by beams of Gospel light."

XXI.

Swiftly went that gray-haired Servant,
Soon returned a trusty Page
Charged with greetings, benedictions,
Thanks, and praises, each a gage

For a sunny thought to cheer the Stranger's way,
Her virtuous scruples to remove, her fears allay.

XXII.

And how blest the Reunited,
While beneath their castle-walls
Runs a deafening noise of welcome! —
Blest, though every tear that falls
Doth in its silence of past sorrow tell,
And makes a meeting seem most like a dear farewell.

XXIII.

Through a haze of human nature,
Glorified by heavenly light,
Looked the beautiful Deliverer
On that overpowering sight,
While across her virgin cheek pure blushes strayed,
For every tender sacrifice her heart had made.

XXIV.

On the ground the weeping Countess
Knelt, and kissed the Stranger's hand;
Act of soul-devoted homage,
Pledge of an eternal band:
Nor did aught of future days that kiss belie,
Which, with a generous shout, the crowd did ratify.

XXV.

Constant to the fair Armenian,
Gentle pleasures round her moved,

Like a tutelary spirit
Reverenced, like a sister loved.
Christian meekness smoothed for all the path of life,
Who, loving most, should wiseliest love, their only strife.

XXVI

Mute memento of that union
In a Saxon church survives,
Where a cross-legged Knight lies sculptured
As between two wedded Wives. —
Figures with armorial signs of race and birth,
And the vain rank the pilgrims bore while yet on earth.

1830.

XXXV.

LOVING AND LIKING:

IRREGULAR VERSES, ADDRESSED TO A CHILD.

(BY MY SISTER.)

THERE 's more in words than I can teach:
Yet listen, Child! — I would not preach;
But only give some plain directions
To guide your speech and your affections.
Say not you *love* a roasted fowl.
But you may love a screaming owl,

And, if you can, the unwieldy toad
That crawls from his secure abode
Within the mossy garden wall
When evening dews begin to fall.
O mark the beauty of his eye!
What wonders in that circle lie!
So clear, so bright, our fathers said
He wears a jewel in his head!
And when, upon some showery day,
Into a path or public way
A frog leaps out from bordering grass,
Startling the timid as they pass,
Do you observe him, and endeavor
To take the intruder into favor;
Learning from him to find a reason
For a light heart in a dull season.
And you may love him in the pool,
That is for him a happy school,
In which he swims as taught by nature,
Fit pattern for a human creature,
Glancing amid the water bright,
And sending upward sparkling light.

Nor blush if o'er your heart be stealing
A love for things that have no feeling:
The Spring's first rose by you espied,
May fill your breast with joyful pride;
And you may love the strawberry-flower,
And love the strawberry in its bower;
But when the fruit, so often praised

For beauty, to your lip is raised,
Say not you *love* the delicate treat,
But *like* it, enjoy it, and thankfully eat.

Long may you love your pensioner mouse,
Though one of a tribe that torment the house:
Nor dislike for her cruel sport the cat,
Deadly foe both of mouse and rat;
Remember she follows the law of her kind,
And Instinct is neither wayward nor blind.
Then think of her beautiful gliding form,
Her tread that would scarcely crush a worm,
And her soothing song by the winter fire,
Soft as the dying throb of the lyre.

I would not circumscribe your love:
It may soar with the eagle and brood with the dove,
May pierce the earth with the patient mole,
Or track the hedgehog to his hole.
Loving and liking are the solace of life,
Rock the cradle of joy, smooth the death-bed of strife.
You love your father and your mother,
Your grown-up and your baby brother;
You love your sister, and your friends,
And countless blessings which God sends:
And while these right affections play,
You *live* each moment of your day;
They lead you on to full content,
And likings fresh and innocent,

That store the mind, the memory feed,
And prompt to many a gentle deed:
But *likings* come, and pass away;
'T is *love* that remains till our latest day:
Our heavenward guide is holy love,
And will be our bliss with saints above

1832.

XXXVI.

FAREWELL LINES

"HIGH bliss is only for a higher state,"
But, surely, if severe afflictions borne
With patience merit the reward of peace,
Peace ye deserve; and may the solid good,
Sought by a wise though late exchange, and here
With bounteous hand beneath a cottage-roof
To you accorded, never be withdrawn,
Nor for the world's best promises renounced.
Most soothing was it for a welcome Friend,
Fresh from the crowded city, to behold
That lonely union, privacy so deep,
Such calm employments, such entire content.
So when the rain is over, the storm laid,
A pair of herons ofttimes have I seen,
Upon a rocky islet, side by side,
Drying their feathers in the sun, at ease;
And so, when night with grateful gloom had fallen

Two glowworms in such nearness that they shared,
As seemed, their soft self-satisfying light,
Each with the other, on the dewy ground,
Where He that made them blesses their repose.—
When wandering among lakes and hills I note,
Once more, those creatures thus by Nature paired,
And guarded in their tranquil state of life,
Even, as your happy presence to my mind
Their union brought, they will repay the debt,
And send a thankful spirit back to you,
With hope that we, dear Friends! shall meet again.

XXXVII.

THE REDBREAST.

(SUGGESTED IN A WESTMORELAND COTTAGE.)

Driven in by Autumn's sharpening air
From half-stripped woods and pastures bare
Brisk Robin seeks a kindlier home:
Not like a beggar does he come,
But enters as a looked-for guest,
Confiding in his ruddy breast,
As if it were a natural shield
Charged with a blazon on the field,
Due to that good and pious deed
Of which we in the Ballad read.

But pensive fancies putting by,
And wild-wood sorrows, speedily
He plays the expert ventriloquist
And, caught by glimpses now, now missed,
Puzzles the listener with a doubt
If the soft voice he throws about
Comes from within doors or without!
Was ever such a sweet confusion
Sustained by delicate illusion?
He 's at your elbow, — to your feeling
The notes are from the floor or ceiling;
And there 's a riddle to be guessed,
Till you have marked his heaving chest,
And busy throat, whose sink and swell
Betray the Elf that loves to dwell
In Robin's bosom, as a chosen cell.

Heart-pleased we smile upon the Bird
If seen, and with like pleasure stirred
Commend him, when he 's only heard.
But small and fugitive our gain
Compared with *hers* who long hath lain,
With languid limbs and patient head,
Reposing on a lone sick-bed;
Where now she daily hears a strain
That cheats her of too busy cares,
Eases her pain, and helps her prayers.
And who but this dear Bird beguiled
The fever of that pale-faced Child;
Now cooling, with his passing wing,

Her forehead, like a breeze of Spring:
Recalling now, with descant soft
Shed round her pillow from aloft,
Sweet thoughts of angels hovering nigh,
And the invisible sympathy
Of "Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
Blessing the bed she lies upon"? *
And sometimes, just as listening ends
In slumber, with the cadence blends
A dream of that low-warbled hymn
Which old folk, fondly pleased to trim
Lamps of faith, now burning dim,
Say that the Cherubs carved in stone,
When clouds gave way at dead of night
And the ancient church was filled with light,
Used to sing in heavenly tone,
Above and round the sacred places
They guard, with winged baby-faces.

Thrice happy Creature! in all lands
Nurtured by hospitable hands:
Free entrance to this cot has he,
Entrance and exit both *yet* free;
And when the keen, unruffled weather,

* The words, —

"Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on," —

are part of a child's prayer, still in general use through the Northern counties.

That thus brings man and bird together,
Shall with its pleasantness be past,
And casement closed and door made fast,
To keep at bay the howling blast,
He needs not fear the season's rage,
For the whole house is Robin's cage.
Whether the bird flit here or there,
O'er table *lilt*, or perch on chair,
Though some may frown and make a stir,
To scare him as a trespasser,
And he belike will flinch or start,
Good friends he has to take his part;
One chiefly, who with voice and look
Pleads for him from the chimney-nook,
Where sits the Dame, and wears away
Her long and vacant holiday;
With images about her heart,
Reflected from the years gone by,
On human nature's second infancy.

1834

XXXVIII.

HER EYES ARE WILD.

I.

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She had a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone:
And underneath the hay-stack warm
And on the greenwood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

II.

"Sweet babe! they say that I am mad;
But nay, my heart is far too glad;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee have no fear of me;
But safe as in a cradle, here,
My lovely baby! thou shalt be:
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe

III.

"A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breast, and pulled at me.
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good:
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood;
O joy for me that sight to see!
For he was here, and only he.

IV.

"Suck, little babe, O suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
O press me with thy little hand!
It loosens something at my chest;
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers prest.
The breeze I see is in the tree:
It comes to cool my babe and me.

V.

"O love me, love me, little boy!
Thou art thy mother's only joy;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go;
The high crag cannot work me harm,

Nor leaping torrents when they howl;
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul;
Then happy lie; for blest am I;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

VI.

"Then do not fear, my boy! for thee
Bold as a lion will I be;
And I will always be thy guide,
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I 'll build an Indian bower; I know
The leaves that make the softest bed:
And, if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true till I am dead,
My pretty thing! then thou shalt sing
As merry as the birds in spring.

VII.

"Thy father cares not for my breast,
'T is thine, sweet baby, there to rest;
'T is all thine own! — and if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'T is fair enough for thee, my dove!
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love:
And what if my poor cheek be brown?
'T is well for me thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

VIII.

" Dread not their taunts, my little Life ;
I am thy father's wedded wife ;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.
If his sweet boy he could forsake,
With me he never would have stayed :
From him no harm my babe can take
But he, poor man, is wretched made ;
And every day we two will pray
For him that 's gone and far away.

IX.

" I 'll teach my boy the sweetest things :
I 'll teach him how the owlet sings.
My little babe ! thy lips are still,
And thou hast almost sucked thy fill.
— Where art thou gone, my own dear child
What wicked looks are those I see ?
Alas ! alas ! that look so wild,
It never, never came from me :
If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
Then I must be for ever sad.

X.

" O smile on me, my little lamb !
For I thy own dear mother am :
My love for thee has well been tried :
I 've sought thy father far and wide.

I know the poisons of the shade;
I know the earth-nuts fit for food:
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid:
We 'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away!
And there, my babe, we 'll live for aye."

1798.

NOTES.

Page 56

"*And, hovering, round it often did a raven fly.*"

From a short MS. poem read to me when an undergraduate, by my schoolfellow and friend, Charles Farish, long since deceased. The verses were by a brother of his, a man of promising genius, who died young.

Page 80.

"*The Borderers.*"

This Dramatic Piece, as noticed in its title-page, was composed in 1795–6. It lay nearly from that time till within the last two or three months unregarded among my papers, without being mentioned even to my most intimate friends. Having, however, impressions upon my mind which made me unwilling to destroy the MS., I determined to undertake the responsibility of publishing it during my own life, rather than impose upon my successors the task of deciding its fate. Accordingly, it has been revised with some care; but as it was at first written, and is now published, without any view to its exhibition upon the stage, not the slightest alteration has been made in the conduct of the story, or the composition of the characters; above all, in respect to the two leading Persons of the Drama, I felt no inducement to make any change. The study of human nature suggests this awful truth, that, as in the

trials to which life subjects us, sin and crime are apt to start from their very opposite qualities, so are there no limits to the hardening of the heart and the perversion of the understanding to which they may carry their slaves. During my long residence in France, while the Revolution was rapidly advancing to its extreme of wickedness, I had frequent opportunities of being an eyewitness of this process, and it was while that knowledge was fresh upon my memory, that the Tragedy of "The Borderers" was composed.

Page 225.

"*The Norman Boy.*"

"Among ancient trees there are few, I believe, at least in France, so worthy of attention as an Oak which may be seen in the 'Pays de Caux,' about a league from Yvetot, close to the church, and in the burial-ground of Allonville.

"The height of this tree does not answer to its girth; the trunk, from the roots to the summit, forms a complete cone; and the inside of this cone is hollow throughout the whole of its height.

"Such is the Oak of Allonville, in its state of nature. The hand of man, however, has endeavored to impress upon it a character still more interesting, by adding a religious feeling to the respect which its age naturally inspires.

"The lower part of its hollow trunk has been transformed into a Chapel of six or seven feet in diameter, carefully wainscotted and paved, and an open iron gate guards the humble sanctuary.

"Leading to it there is a staircase, which twists round the body of the tree. At certain seasons of the year divine service is performed in this Chapel.

"The summit has been broken off many years, but there is a surface at the top of the trunk, of the diameter of a very large tree, and from it rises a pointed roof, covered with slates, in the form of a steeple, which is surmounted with an iron

Cross, that rises in a picturesque manner from the middle of the leaves, like an ancient Hermitage above the surrounding Wood.

" Over the entrance to the Chapel an Inscription appears, which informs us it was erected by the Abbé du Détroit, Curate of Allonville in the year 1696; and over a door is another dedicating it 'To Our Lady of Peace.' "

Vide No. 14, *Saturday Magazine.*

END OF VOL. I.

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

By persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little incidents must have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such incidents, and renew the gratification of such feelings, names have been given to places by the Author and some of his friends, and the following Poems written in consequence.

I.

It was an April morning: fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed; and yet the voice
Of waters which the Winter had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone.
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living things
Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
The budding groves seemed eager to urge on
The steps of June; as if their various hues
Were only hindrances that stood between

Them and their object: but, meanwhile, prevailed
Such an entire contentment in the air,
That every naked ash, and tardy tree
Yet leafless, showed as if the countenance
With which it looked on this delightful day
Were native to the Summer. — Up the brook
I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
Alive to all things and forgetting all.
At length I to a sudden turning came
In this continuous glen, where down a rock
The Stream, so ardent in its course before,
Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
Which I till then had heard appeared the voice
Of common pleasure: beast and bird, the lamb,
The shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush,
Vied with this waterfall, and made a song,
Which, while I listened, seemed like the wild growth
Or like some natural produce of the air,
That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here;
But 't was the foliage of the rocks, — the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
And on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain-cottage might be seen.
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,
'Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook,

My EMMA, I will dedicate to thee."
—— Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of EMMA'S DELL.

1800.

II.

TO JOANNA.

AMID the smoke of cities did you pass
The time of early youth; and there you learned,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living Beings by your own fireside,
With such a strong devotion, that your heart
Is slow to meet the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and
groves.
Yet we, who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling retired in our simplicity
Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
Joanna! and I guess, since you have been
So distant from us now for two long years,

That you will gladly listen to discourse,
However trivial, if you thence be taught
That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
Familiarly of you and of old times.

While I was seated, now some ten days past,
Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
Their ancient neighbor, the old steeple-tower,
The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
Came forth to greet me; and when he had asked,
"How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted Maid?
And when will she return to us?" he paused;
And, and after short exchange of village news,
He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,
Reviving obsolete idolatry,
I, like a Runic Priest, in characters
Of formidable size had chiselled out
Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
Above the Rotha, by the forest-side.
— Now, by those dear immunities of heart
Engendered between malice and true love,
I was not loth to be so catechized,
And this was my reply: — "As it befell,
One summer morning we had walked abroad
At break of day, Joanna and myself.
— 'T was that delightful season when the broom,
Full-flowered, and visible on every steep,
Along the copses runs in veins of gold.
Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks;
And when we came in front of that tall rock

That eastward looks, I there stopped short, and
stood
Tracing the lofty barrier with my eye
From base to summit; such delight I found
To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower,
That intermixture of delicious hues,
Along so vast a surface, all at once,
In one impression, by connecting force
Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
— When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,
Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.
The Rock, like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again;
That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-scar,
And the tall steep of Silver-how, sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone;
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the Lady's voice, — old Skiddaw blew
His speaking-trumpet; — back out of the clouds
Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.
— Now whether" (said I to our cordial Friend,
Who in the heyday of astonishment
Smiled in my face) "this were in simple truth
A work accomplished by the brotherhood
Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touched
With dreams and visionary impulses

To me alone imparted, sure I am
That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
And while we both were listening, to my side
The fair Joanna drew, as if she wished
To shelter from some object of her fear.
— And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
Beneath this rock, at sunrise, on a calm
And silent morning, I sat down, and there,
In memory of affections old and true,
I chiselled out in those rude characters
Joanna's name deep in the living stone: —
And I, and all who dwell by my fireside,
Have called the lovely rock, JOANNA'S ROCK."

1800.

NOTE. — In Cumberland and Westmoreland are several inscriptions, upon the native rock, which, from the wasting of time, and the rudeness of the workmanship, have been mistaken for Runic. They are, without doubt, Roman.

The Rotha, mentioned in this poem, is the river which, flowing through the lakes of Grasmere and Rydale, falls into Wynandermere. On Helm-crag, that impressive single mountain at the head of the Vale of Grasmere, is a rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an old woman cowering. Close by this rock is one of those fissures or caverns, which in the language of the country are called dungeons. Most of the mountains here mentioned immediately surround the Vale of Grasmere; of the others, some are at a considerable distance, but they belong to the same cluster.

III.

THERE is an Eminence, — of these our hills
The last that parleys with the setting sun;
We can behold it from our orchard-seat;
And, when at evening we pursue our walk
Along the public way, this Peak, so high
Above us, and so distant in its height,
Is visible; and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
The meteors make of it a favorite haunt:
The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
In the mid-heavens, is never half so fair
As when he shines above it. 'T is in truth
The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
And she who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion, that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude to me,
Hath to this lonely Summit given my Name.

1800.

IV.

A NARROW girdle of rough stones and crags
A rude and natural causeway, interposed
Between the water and a winding slope
Of coarse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore

Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy:
And there myself and two beloved Friends,
One calm September morning, ere the mist
Had altogether yielded to the sun,
Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.
—— Ill suits the road with one in haste; but we
Played with our time; and, as we strolled along
It was our occupation to observe
Such objects as the waves had tossed ashore, —
Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered bough,
Each on the other heaped, along the line
Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
Suddenly halting now, — a lifeless stand!
And starting off again with freak as sudden;
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its playmate, rather say, its moving soul.
—— And often, trifling with a privilege
Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
And now the other, to point out, perchance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall fern,
So stately of the Queen Osmunda named;

Plant lovelier, in its own retired abode
On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.
— So fared we that bright morning: from the fields,
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of reapers, men and women, boys and girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
And feeding thus our fancies, we advanced
Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze, was seen
Before us, on a point of jutting land,
The tall and upright figure of a Man
Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
Angling beside the margin of the lake.
"Improvident and reckless," we exclaimed,
"The Man must be, who thus can lose a day
Of the mid-harvest, when the laborer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter-time."
Thus talking of that Peasant, we approached
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone; whereat he turned his head
To greet us, — and we saw a Man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I looked at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustained. —
Too weak to labor in the harvest field,

The Man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead, unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
— Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then received
The same admonishment, have called the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by mariner was given to bay
Or foreland, on a new-discovered coast;
And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the name it bears

1800.

V.

TO M. H.

OUR walk was far among the ancient trees:
There was no road, nor any woodman's path;
But a thick umbrage — checking the wild growth
Of weed and sapling, along soft green turf
Beneath the branches — of itself had made

A track, that brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods.
All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
On its firm margin, even as from a well,
Or some stone basin which the herdsman's hand
Had shaped for their refreshment; nor did sun,
Or wind from any quarter, ever come,
But as a blessing to this calm recess,
This glade of water and this one green field.
The spot was made by Nature for herself;
The travellers know it not, and 't will remain
Unknown to them; but it is beautiful;
And if a man should plant his cottage near,
Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
And blend its waters with his daily meal,
He would so love it, that in his death-hour
Its image would survive among his thoughts:
And therefore, my sweet MARY, this still Nook,
With all its beeches, we have named from You!

1800.

VI.

WHEN, to the attractions of the busy world,
Preferring studious leisure, I had chosen
A habitation in this peaceful Vale,
Sharp season followed of continual storm

In deepest winter; and, from week to week,
Pathway, and lane, and public road, were clogged
With frequent showers of snow. Upon a hill
At a short distance from my cottage stands
A stately Fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for I found, beneath the roof
Of that perennial shade, a cloistral place
Of refuge, with an unencumbered floor.
Here, in safe covert, on the shallow snow,
And, sometimes, on a speck of visible earth,
The redbreast near me hopped; nor was I loth
To sympathize with vulgar coppice birds,
That, for protection from the nipping blast,
Hither repaired. — A single beech-tree grew
Within this grove of firs! and, on the fork
Of that one beech, appeared a thrush's nest;
A last year's nest, conspicuously built
At such small elevation from the ground
As gave sure sign that they, who in that house
Of nature and of love had made their home
Amid the fir-trees, all the summer long
Dwelt in a tranquil spot. And oftentimes
A few sheep, stragglers from some mountain-flock
Would watch my motions with suspicious stare,
From the remotest outskirts of the grove, —
Some nook where they had made their final stand
Huddling together from two fears, — the fear
Of me and of the storm. Full many an hour
Here did I lose. But in this grove the trees
Had been so thickly planted, and had thriven

In such perplexed and intricate array;
That vainly did I seek, beneath their stems
A length of open space, where to and fro
My feet might move without concern or care;
And, baffled thus, though earth from day to day
Was fettered, and the air by storm disturbed,
I ceased the shelter to frequent, — and prized
Less than I wished to prize that calm recess.

The snows dissolved, and genial Spring returned
To clothe the fields with verdure. Other haunts
Meanwhile were mine; till, one bright April day,
By chance retiring from the glare of noon
To this forsaken covert, there I found
A hoary pathway traced between the trees,
And winding on with such an easy line
Along a natural opening, that I stood
Much wondering how I could have sought in vain
For what was now so obvious. To abide,
For an allotted interval of ease,
Under my cottage-roof, had gladly come
From the wild sea a cherished Visitant;
And with the sight of this same path, begun,
Begun and ended, in the shady grove,
Pleasant conviction flashed upon my mind
That, to this opportune recess allured,
He had surveyed it with a finer eye,
A heart more wakeful; and had worn the track
By pacing here, unwearied and alone,
In that habitual restlessness of foot

That haunts the Sailor measuring o'er and o'er
His short domain upon the vessel's deck,
While she pursues her course through the dreary
sea.

When thou hadst quitted Esthwaite's pleasant
shore,
And taken thy first leave of those green hills
And rocks that were the playground of thy youth,
Year followed year, my Brother! and we two,
Conversing not, knew little in what mould
Each other's mind was fashioned; and at length,
When once again we met in Grasmere Vale,
Between us there was little other bond
Than common feelings of fraternal love.
But thou, a schoolboy, to the sea hadst carried
Undying recollections; Nature there
Was with thee; she, who loved us both, she still
Was with thee; and even so didst thou become
A *silent* Poet; from the solitude
Of the vast sea didst bring a watchful heart
Still couchant, an inevitable ear,
And an eye practised like a blind man's touch.
— Back to the joyless Ocean thou art gone;
Nor from this vestige of thy musing hours
Could I withhold thy honored name, — and now
I love the fir-grove with a perfect love.
Thither do I withdraw when cloudless suns
Shine hot, or wind blows troublesome and strong
And there I sit at evening, when the steep

Of Silver-how, and Grasmere's peaceful lake,
And one green island, gleam between the stems
Of the dark firs, a visionary scene!
And while I gaze upon the spectacle
Of clouded splendor, on this dream-like sight
Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee,
My Brother, and on all which thou hast lost.
Nor seldom, if I rightly guess, while Thou,
Muttering the verses which I muttered first
Among the mountains, through the midnight watch
Art pacing thoughtfully the vessel's deck
In some far region, here, while o'er my head,
At every impulse of the moving breeze,
The Fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like sound,
Alone I tread this path; — for aught I know,
Timing my steps to thine; and, with a store
Of undistinguishable sympathies,
Mingling most earnest wishes for the day
When we, and others whom we love, shall meet
A second time, in Grasmere's happy Vale.

1805.

NOTE. — This wish was not granted; the lamented Person not long after perished by shipwreck, in discharge of his duty as commander of the Honorable East India Company's vessel, the Earl of Abergavenny.

VII.

FORTH from a jutting ridge, around whose base
Winds our deep Vale, two heath-clad Rocks ascend
In fellowship, the loftiest of the pair
Rising to no ambitious height; yet both,
O'er lake and stream, mountain and flowery mead,
Unfolded prospects fair as human eyes
Ever beheld. Up-led with mutual help,
To one or other brow of those twin Peaks
Were two adventurous Sisters wont to climb,
And took no note of the hour while thence they gazed,
The blooming heath their couch, gazed, side by side,
In speechless admiration. I, a witness
And frequent sharer of their calm delight
With thankful heart, to either Eminence
Gave the baptismal name each Sister bore.
Now are they parted, far as Death's cold hand
Hath power to part the Spirits of those who love
As they did love. Ye kindred Pinnacles, —
That, while the generations of mankind
Follow each other to their hiding-place
In time's abyss, are privileged to endure
Beautiful in yourselves, and richly graced
With like command of beauty, — grant your aid
For MARY'S humble, SARAH'S silent claim,
That their pure joy in nature may survive
From age to age in blended memory.

1845

POEMS OF THE FANCY.

I.

A MORNING EXERCISE.

FANCY, who leads the pastimes of the glad,
Full oft is pleased a wayward dart to throw;
Sending sad shadows after things not sad,
Peopling the harmless fields with signs of woe:
Beneath her sway, a simple forest cry
Becomes an echo of man's misery.

Blithe ravens croak of death; and when the owl
Tries his two voices for a favorite strain, —
Tu-whit! Tu-whoo! — the unsuspecting fowl
Forebodes mishap or seems but to complain;
Fancy, intent to harass and annoy,
Can thus pervert the evidence of joy.

Through border wilds where naked Indians stray,
Myriads of notes attest her subtle skill;
A feathered taskmaster cries, "WORK AWAY!"
And, in thy iteration, "WHIP POOR WILL!"*

* See Waterton's Wanderings in South America.

Is heard the spirit of a toil-worn slave,
Lashed out of life, not quiet in the grave.

What wonder? at her bidding, ancient lays
Steeped in dire grief the voice of Philomel;
And that fleet messenger of summer days,
The Swallow, twittered subject to like spell;
But ne'er could Fancy bend the buoyant Lark
To melancholy service. — Hark! O hark!

The daisy sleeps upon the dewy lawn,
Not lifting yet the head that evening bowed;
But *He* is risen, a later star of dawn,
Glittering and twinkling near yon rosy cloud;
Bright gem instinct with music, vocal spark;
The happiest bird that sprang out of the Ark.

Hail, blest above all kinds! — Supremely skilled
Restless with fixed to balance, high with low,
Thou leav'st the halcyon free her hopes to build
On such forbearance as the deep may show;
Perpetual flight, unchecked by earthly ties,
Leav'st to the wandering bird of paradise.

Faithful, though swift as lightning, the meek Dove
Yet more hath Nature reconciled in thee;
So constant with thy downward eye of love,
Yet, in aerial singleness, so free;
So humble, yet so ready to rejoice
In power of wing and never-wearied voice.

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler! — that love-prompted
strain
('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

How would it please old Ocean to partake,
With sailors longing for a breeze in vain,
The harmony thy notes most gladly make,
Where earth resembles most his own domain!
Urania's self might welcome with pleased ear
These matins mounting towards her native sphere.

Chanter by heaven attracted, whom no bars
To daylight known deter from that pursuit,
'T is well that some sage instinct, when the stars
Come forth at evening, keeps thee still and mute;
For not an eyelid could to sleep incline
Wert thou among them, singing as they shine!

1828.

II.

A FLOWER-GARDEN.

AT COLEORTON HALL, LEICESTERSHIRE.

TELL me, ye Zephyrs! that unfold,
While fluttering o'er this gay recess,
Pinions that fanned the teeming mould
Of Eden's blissful wilderness,
Did only softly stealing hours
There close the peaceful lives of flowers?

Say, when the *moving* creatures saw
All kinds commingled without fear,
Prevailed a like indulgent law
For the still growths that prosper here?
Did wanton fawn and kid forbear
The half-blown rose, the lily spare?

Or peeped they often from their beds
And prematurely disappeared,
Devoured like pleasure ere it spreads
A bosom to the sun endeared?
If such their harsh, untimely doom,
It falls not *here* on bud or bloom.

All summer long the happy Eve
Of this fair spot her flowers may bind,
Nor e'er, with ruffled fancy, grieve,
From the next glance she casts, to find

That love for little things by Fate
Is rendered vain as love for great.

Yet, where the guardian fence is wound,
So subtly are our eyes beguiled
We see not nor suspect a bound,
No more than in some forest wild;
The sight is free as air, — or crost
Only by art in nature lost.

And though the jealous turf refuse
By random footsteps to be prest,
And feed on never-sullied dews,
Ye, gentle breezes from the west,
With all the ministers of hope
Are tempted to this sunny slope!

And hither throngs of birds resort;
Some, inmates lodged in shady nests,
Some, perched on stems of stately port
That nod to welcome transient guests;
While hare and leveret, seen at play,
Appear not more shut out than they.

Apt emblem (for reproof of pride)
This delicate inclosure shows
Of modest kindness, that would hide
The firm protection she bestows;
Of manners, like its viewless fence,
Insuring peace to innocence.

Thus spake the moral Muse; — her wing
Abruptly spreading to depart,
She left that farewell offering,
Memento for some docile heart;
That may respect the good old age
When Fancy was Truth's willing Page;
And Truth would skim the flowery glade,
Though entering but as Fancy's Shade.

1834

III.

A WHIRL-BLAST from behind the hill
Rushed o'er the wood with startling sound;
Then — all at once the air was still,
And showers of hailstones pattered round.
Where leafless oaks towered high above,
I sat within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green;
A fairer bower was never seen.
From year to year the spacious floor
With withered leaves is covered o'er,
And all the year the bower is green.
But see! where'er the hailstones drop,
The withered leaves all skip and hop;
There 's not a breeze, — no breath of air, —
Yet here, and there, and everywhere
Along the floor, beneath the shade
By those embowering hollies made,

The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
As if with pipes and music rare
Some Robin Good-fellow were there,
And all those leaves, in festive glee,
Were dancing to the minstrelsy.

1799.

IV.

THE WATERFALL AND THE EGLANTINE.

I.

"Begone, thou fond presumptuous Elf,"
Exclaimed an angry voice,
"Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!"
A small Cascade fresh swoln with snows
Thus threatened a poor Brier-rose,
That, all bespattered with his foam,
And dancing high and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home.

II.

"Dost thou presume my course to block?
Off, off! or, puny Thing!
I 'll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling."

The Flood was tyrannous and strong;
The patient Brier suffered long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be past;
But, seeing no relief, at last
He ventured to reply.

III.

"Ah!" said the Brier, "blame me not;
Why should we dwell in strife?
We who in this sequestered spot
Once lived a happy life!
You stirred me on my rocky bed, —
What pleasure through my veins you spread
The summer long, from day to day,
My leaves you freshened and bedewed;
Nor was it common gratitude
That did your cares repay.

IV.

"When Spring came on with bud and bell,
Among these rocks did I
Before you hang my wreaths, to tell
That gentle days were nigh!
And in the sultry summer hours,
I sheltered you with leaves and flowers;
And in my leaves — now shed and gone —
The linnet lodged, and for us two
Chanted his pretty songs, when you
Had little voice or none.

v.

" But now proud thoughts are in your breast, —
What grief is mine you see;
Ah! would you think, even yet how blest
Together we might be!
Though of both leaf and flower bereft,
Some ornaments to me are left;
Rich store of scarlet hips is mine,
With which I, in my humble way,
Would deck you many a winter day,
A happy Eglantine! "

VI.

What more he said I cannot tell,
The Torrent down the rocky dell
Came thundering loud and fast;
I listened, nor aught else could hear;
The Brier quaked — and much I fear
Those accents were his last.

1800.

V.

THE OAK AND THE BROOM.

A PASTORAL.

I.

His simple truths did Andrew glean
Beside the babbling rills;

A careful student he had been
Among the woods and hills.
One winter's night, when through the trees
The wind was roaring, on his knees
His youngest-born did Andrew hold:
And while the rest, a ruddy choir,
Were seated round their blazing fire,
This Tale the Shepherd told.

II.

"I saw a crag, a lofty stone
As ever tempest beat!
Out of its head an Oak had grown,
A Broom out of its feet.
The time was March, a cheerful noon, —
The thaw-wind, with the breath of June,
Breathed gently from the warm southwest;
When, in a voice sedate with age,
This Oak, a giant and a sage,
His neighbor thus addressed: —

III.

"'Eight weary weeks, through rock and clay.
Along this mountain's edge,
The Frost hath wrought both night and day,
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up! and think, above your head
What trouble, surely, will be bred;
Last night I heard a crash, — 't is true,
The splinters took another road;

I see them yonder, — what a load
For such a Thing as you!

IV.

"'You are preparing, as before,
To deck your slender shape;
And yet, just three years back — no more —
You had a strange escape:
Down from yon cliff a fragment broke;
It thundered down, with fire and smoke,
And hitherward pursued its way;
This ponderous block was caught by me,
And o'er your head, as you may see,
'T is hanging to this day!

V.

"'If breeze or bird to this rough steep
Your kind's first seed did bear,
The breeze had better been asleep,
The bird caught in a snare:
For you and your green twigs decoy
The little witless shepherd-boy
To come and slumber in your bower;
And, trust me, on some sultry noon,
Both you and he, Heaven knows how soon
Will perish in one hour.

VI.

"'From me this friendly warning take —'
The Broom began to doze,

And thus, to keep herself awake,
Did gently interpose:
'My thanks for your discourse are due;
That more than what you say is true,
I know, and I have known it long;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, whether young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

VII.

"'Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man,
Who is not wise at all.
For me, why should I wish to roam?
This spot is my paternal home,
It is my pleasant heritage;
My father many a happy year
Spread here his careless blossoms, here
Attained a good old age.

VIII.

"'Even such as his may be my lot.
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors? Am I not
In truth a favored plant!
On me such bounty Summer pours,
That I am covered o'er with flowers;
And, when the Frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay

That you might look at me and say,
This Plant can never die.

IX.

"'The Butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade the mother-ewe
Lies with her infant lamb; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy which they partake,
It is a joy to me.'

X.

"Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
The Broom might have pursued
Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renewed;
But in the branches of the Oak
Two ravens now began to croak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling bees
To rest or murmur there.

XI.

"One night, my Children! from the north
There came a furious blast;

At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the cliff I passed.
The storm had fallen upon the Oak,
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirled, and whirled him far away;
And, in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day."

1800.

VI.

TO A SEXTON.

Let thy wheelbarrow alone!
Wherefore, Sexton, piling still
In thy bone-house bone on bone?
'T is already like a hill
In a field of battle made,
Where three thousand skulls are laid;
These died in peace each with the other,—
Father, sister, friend, and brother.

Mark the spot to which I point!
From this platform, eight feet square,
Take not even a finger-joint:
Andrew's whole fireside is there.
Here, alone, before thine eyes,
Simon's sickly daughter lies,

From weakness now and pain defended,
Whom he twenty winters tended.

Look but at the gardener's pride, —
How he glories, when he sees
Roses, lilies, side by side,
Violets in families!
By the heart of Man, his tears,
By his hopes and by his fears,
Thou, too heedless, art the Warden
Of a far superior garden.

Thus then, each to other dear,
Let them all in quiet lie,
Andrew there, and Susan here,
Neighbors in mortality.
And should I live through sun and rain,
Seven widowed years without my Jane,
O Sexton, do not then remove her,
Let one grave hold the Loved and Lover!

1798.

VII.

TO THE DAISY.

"Her * divine skill taught me this,
That from everything I saw
I could some instruction draw,
And raise pleasure to the height
Through the meanest object's sight.
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustelling;
By a Daisy whose leaves spread
Shut when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush or tree;
She could more infuse in me,
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man."

G. Wither.

In youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill, in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
  Most pleased when most uneasy;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly Nature's love partake,
  Of thee, sweet Daisy!

Thee Winter in the garland wears
That thinly decks his few gray hairs;

* His Muse.

Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
That she may sun thee;
Whole Summer-fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight
When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane;
Pleased at his greeting thee again;
Yet nothing daunted,
Nor grieved, if thou be set at naught:
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such are wanted.

Be violets in their sacred mews
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
Her head impearling;
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
Near the green holly,

And wearily at length should fare;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art! — a friend at hand, to scare
His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension;
Some steady love; some brief delight;
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right;
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn
A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life, our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-smitten by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
With kindred gladness:
And when, at dusk, by dews oppress
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest

Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing;
An instinct call it, a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the Year! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course, — when day's begun
As ready to salute the sun
As lark or leveret,
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time; — thou not in vain
Art Nature's favorite.*

1802.

* See, in Chaucer and the elder Poets, the honours formerly paid to this flower.

VIII.

TO THE SAME FLOWER.

With little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Daisy! again I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Commonplace
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace,
Which Love makes for thee!

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humor of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure, of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations;
A queen in crown of rubies drest;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next, — and instantly
The freak is over,
The shape will vanish, — and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some faery bold
In fight to cover!

I see thee glittering from afar, —
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest; —
May peace come never to his nest,
Who shall reprove thee!

Bright *Flower!* for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet, silent creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

1805

IX.

THE GREEN LINNET.

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of Spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment:
A Life, a Presence like the air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel-trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
  Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
  That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
  Pours forth a song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless form he chose to feign,
  While fluttering in the bushes.

1803.

X.

TO A SKYLARK.

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
  For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
  Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
  Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky.

Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou wouldst be loth
To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

1805.

XI.

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE.*

Pansies, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there 's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story:
There 's a flower that shall be mine.
'T is the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I 'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little Flower! — I 'll make a stir
Like a sage astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself;
Since we needs must first have met,
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet

* Common Pilewort.

'T was a face I did not know;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we 've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
Travel with the multitude:
Never heed them; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers;
But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near at home;
Spring is coming, thou art come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
Careless of thy neighborhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane; — there 's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 't is good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!
Buttercups, that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine.

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth;
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command,
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behoove,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

1808

XII.

TO THE SAME FLOWER.

Pleasures newly found are sweet
When they lie about our feet:
February last, my heart
First at sight of thee was glad;
All unheard of as thou art,

Thou must needs, I think, have had,
Celandine! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know.

I have not a doubt but he,
Whosoe'er the man might be,
Who the first with pointed rays
(Workman worthy to be sainted)
Set the sign-board in a blaze,
When the rising sun he painted,
Took the fancy from a glance
At thy glittering countenance.

Soon as gentle breezes bring
News of Winter's vanishing,
And the children build their bowers,
Sticking 'kerchief-plots of mould
All about with full-blown flowers,
Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold!
With the proudest thou art there,
Mantling in the tiny square.

Often have I sighed to measure
By myself a lonely pleasure,
Sighed to think I read a book,
Only read, perhaps, by me;
Yet I long could overlook
Thy bright coronet and thee,
And thy arch and wily ways,
And thy store of other praise.

Blithe of heart, from week to week
Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;
While the patient primrose sits
Like a beggar in the cold,
Thou, a flower of wiser wits,
Slip'st into thy sheltering hold;
Liveliest of the vernal train
When ye all are out again.

Drawn by what peculiar spell,
By what charm of sight or smell,
Does the dim-eyed, curious Bee,
Laboring for her waxen cells,
Fondly settle upon thee,
Prized above all buds and bells
Opening daily at thy side,
By the season multiplied?

Thou art not beyond the moon,
But a thing "beneath our shoon"
Let the bold Discoverer thrid
In his bark the polar sea;
Rear who will a pyramid;
Praise it is enough for me,
If there be but three or four
Who will love my little Flower.

XIII.

THE SEVEN SISTERS;

OR, THE SOLITUDE OF BINNORIE.

I.

Seven Daughters had Lord Archibald,
All children of one mother:
You could not say in one short day
What love they bore each other.
A garland, of seven lilies, wrought!
Seven Sisters that together dwell;
But he, bold Knight as ever fought,
Their Father, took of them no thought,
He loved the wars so well.
Sing. mournfully, O, mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

II.

Fresh blows the wind, a western wind,
And from the shores of Erin,
Across the wave, a Rover brave
To Binnorie is steering:
Right onward to the Scottish strand
The gallant ship is borne;
The warriors leap upon the land,
And hark! the Leader of the band
Hath blown his bugle-horn.
Sing, mournfully, O, mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

III.

Beside a grotto of their own,
With boughs above them closing,
The Seven are laid, and in the shade
They lie like fawns reposing.
But now, upstarting with affright,
At noise of man and steed,
Away they fly to left, to right: —
Of your fair household, Father-Knight,
Methinks you take small heed!
Sing, mournfully, O, mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

IV.

Away the seven fair Campbells fly,
And, over hill and hollow,
With menace proud, and insult loud,
The youthful Rovers follow.
Cried they, "Your Father loves to roam:
Enough for him to find
The empty house when he comes home;
For us your yellow ringlets comb,
For us be fair and kind!"
Sing, mournfully, O, mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

V.

Some close behind, some side by side,
Like clouds in stormy weather;
They run, and cry, "Nay, let us die,

And let us die together."
A lake was near; the shore was steep;
There never foot had been;
They ran, and with a desperate leap
Together plunged into the deep,
Nor ever more were seen.
Sing, mournfully, O, mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

VI.

The stream that flows out of the lake,
As through the glen it rambles,
Repeats a moan o'er moss and stone,
For those seven lovely Campbells.
Seven little Islands, green and bare,
Have risen from out the deep:
The fishers say, those sisters fair
By faeries all are buried there,
And there together sleep.
Sing, mournfully, O, mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

1804.

XIV.

WHO fancied what a pretty sight
This Rock would be if edged around
With living snowdrops? circlet bright!
How glorious to this orchard-ground!

Who loved the little Rock, and set
Upon its head this coronet?

Was it the humor of a child?
Or rather of some gentle maid,
Whose brows, the day that she was styled
The shepherd-queen, were thus arrayed?
Of man mature, or matron sage,
Or old man toying with his age?

I asked, — 't was whispered: The device
To each and all might well belong;
It is the Spirit of Paradise
That prompts such work, a Spirit strong,
That gives to all the selfsame bent
Where life is wise and innocent.

1803.

XV.

THE REDBREAST CHASING THE BUTTERFLY.

Art thou the bird whom Man loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin;
The bird that comes about our doors
When Autumn winds are sobbing?
Art thou the Peter of Norway Boors?

Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland?
The bird, that by some name or other
All men who know thee call their brother,
The darling of children and men?
Could Father Adam* open his eyes
And see this sight beneath the skies,
He 'd wish to close them again.

— If the Butterfly knew but his friend,
Hither his flight he would bend;
And find his way to me,
Under the branches of the tree:
In and out, he darts about;
Can this be the bird, to man so good,
That, after their bewildering,
Covered with leaves the little children,
So painfully in the wood?

What ailed thee, Robin, that thou couldst pursue
A beautiful creature,
That is gentle by nature?
Beneath the summer sky
From flower to flower let him fly;
'T is all that he wishes to do.
The cheerer thou of our in-door sadness,

* See Paradise Lost, Book XI., where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the Eagle chasing "two Birds of gayest plume," and the gentle Hart and Hind pursued by their enemy.

He is the friend of our summer gladness:
What hinders, then, that ye should be
Playmates in the sunny weather,
And fly about in the air together?
His beautiful wings in crimson are drest,
A crimson as bright as thine own:
Wouldst thou be happy in thy nest,
O pious Bird! whom man loves best,
Love him, or leave him alone!

1805.

XVI.

SONG FOR THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

FOUNDED UPON A BELIEF PREVALENT AMONG THE PASTORAL VALES OF WESTMORELAND.

Swiftly turn the murmuring wheel!
Night has brought the welcome hour,
When the weary fingers feel
Help, as if from faery power;
Dewy night o'ershades the ground;
Turn the swift wheel round and round!

Now, beneath the starry sky,
Couch the widely scattered sheep;—
Ply the pleasant labor, ply!
For the spindle, while they sleep,

Runs with speed more smooth and fine,
Gathering up a trustier line.

Short-lived likings may be bred
By a glance from fickle eyes;
But true love is like the thread
Which the kindly wool supplies,
When the flocks are all at rest
Sleeping on the mountain's breast.

1815.

XVII.

HINT FROM THE MOUNTAINS

FOR CERTAIN POLITICAL PRETENDERS.

"WHO but hails the sight with pleasure
When the wings of genius rise,
Their ability to measure
With great enterprise!
But in man was ne'er such daring
As yon Hawk exhibits, pairing
His brave spirit with the war in
The stormy skies!

"Mark him, how his power he uses,
Lays it by, at will resumes!
Mark, ere for his haunt he chooses
Clouds and utter glooms!

There, he wheels in downward mazes;
Sunward now his flight he raises,
Catches fire, as seems, and blazes
With uninjured plumes!"

ANSWER.

"Stranger, 't is no act of courage
Which aloft thou dost discern;
No bold *bird* gone forth to forage
'Mid the tempest stern;
But such mockery as the nations
See, when public perturbations
Lift men from their native stations
Like yon TUFT OF FERN;—

"Such it is; the aspiring creature
Soaring on undaunted wing,
(So you fancied,) is by nature
A dull, helpless thing,
Dry and withered, light and yellow;—
That to be the tempest's fellow!
Wait,—and you shall see how hollow
Its endeavoring!"

XVIII.

ON SEEING A NEEDLE-CASE IN THE FORM OF A HARP.

THE WORK OF E. M. S.

FROWNS are on every Muse's face,
Reproaches from their lips are sent,
That mimicry should thus disgrace
The noble Instrument.

A very Harp in all but size!
Needles for strings in apt gradation!
Minerva's self would stigmatize
The unclassic profanation.

Even her *own* needle, that subdued
Arachne's rival spirit,
Though wrought in Vulcan's happiest mood,
Such honor could not merit.

And this, too, from the Laureate's Child,
A living lord of melody!
How will her Sire be reconciled
To the refined indignity?

I spake, when whispered a low voice:
"Bard! moderate your ire;

Spirits of all degrees rejoice
In presence of the lyre.

"The Minstrels of Pygmean bands,
Dwarf Genii, moonlight-loving Fays,
Have shells to fit their tiny hands
And suit their slender lays.

"Some, still more delicate of ear,
Have lutes (believe my words)
Whose framework is of gossamer,
While sunbeams are the chords.

"Gay Sylphs this miniature will court,
Made vocal by their brushing wings,
And sullen Gnomes will learn to sport
Around its polished strings;

"Whence strains to lovesick maiden dear,
While in her lonely bower she tries
To cheat the thought she cannot cheer,
By fanciful embroideries.

"Trust, angry Bard! a knowing Sprite,
Nor think the Harp her lot deplores;
Though 'mid the stars the Lyre shine bright,
Love *stoops* as fondly as he soars."

1827

XIX.

TO A LADY,

IN ANSWER TO A REQUEST THAT I WOULD WRITE HER A POEM UPON SOME DRAWINGS THAT SHE HAD MADE OF FLOWERS IN THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA.

Fair Lady! can I sing of flowers
That in Madeira bloom and fade, —
I who ne'er sat within their bowers,
Nor through their sunny lawns have strayed?
How they in sprightly dance are worn
By shepherd groom or May-day queen,
Or holy festal pomps adorn,
These eyes have never seen.

Yet though to me the pencil's art
No like remembrances can give,
Your portraits still may reach the heart,
And there for gentle pleasure live;
While Fancy raging with free scope
Shall on some lovely Alien set
A name with us endeared to hope,
To peace, or fond regret.

Still as we look with nicer care,
Some new resemblance we may trace:
A *Heart's-ease* will perhaps be there,
A *Speedwell* may not want its place.

And so may we, with charmèd mind
Beholding what your skill has wrought,
Another *Star-of-Bethlehem* find,
A new *Forget-me-not.*

From earth to heaven with motion fleet,
From heaven to earth, our thoughts will pass,
A *Holy-Thistle* here we meet
And there a *Shepherd's Weather-glass;*
And haply some familiar name
Shall grace the fairest, sweetest plant,
Whose presence cheers the drooping frame
Of English Emigrant.

Gazing, she feels its power beguile
Sad thoughts, and breathes with easier breath;
Alas! that meek, that tender smile
Is but a harbinger of death:
And pointing with a feeble hand,
She says, in faint words by sighs broken,
Bear for me to my native land
This precious Flower, true love's last token.

XX.

GLAD sight wherever new with old
Is joined, through some dear home-born tie
The life of all that we behold
Depends upon that mystery.
Vain is the glory of the sky,
The beauty vain of field and grove,
Unless, while with admiring eye
We gaze, we also learn to love.

XXI.

THE CONTRAST.

THE PARROT AND THE WREN.

I.

WITHIN her gilded cage confined,
I saw a dazzling Belle,
A Parrot of that famous kind
Whose name is NONPAREIL.

Like beads of glossy jet her eyes;
And, smoothed by Nature's skill,
With pearl or gleaming agate vies
Her finely-curvèd bill.

Her plumy mantle's living hues,
In mass opposed to mass,
Outshine the splendor that imbues
The robes of pictured glass.

And, sooth to say, an apter Mate
Did never tempt the choice
Of feathered thing most delicate
In figure and in voice.

But, exiled from Australian bowers,
And singleness her lot,
She trills her song with tutored powers,
Or mocks each casual note.

No more of pity for regrets
With which she may have striven!
Now but in wantonness she frets,
Or spite, if cause be given;

Arch, volatile, a sportive bird
By social glee inspired;
Ambitious to be seen or heard,
And pleased to be admired!

II.

This moss-lined shed, green, soft, and dry,
Harbors a self-contented Wren,
Not shunning man's abode, though shy,
Almost as thought itself, of human ken.

Strange places, coverts unendeared,
She never tried; the very nest
In which this Child of Spring was reared,
Is warmed, thro' Winter, by her feathery breast.

To the bleak winds she sometimes gives
A slender, unexpected strain;
Proof that the hermitess still lives,
Though she appear not, and be sought in vain.

Say, Dora! tell me, by yon placid moon,
If called to choose between the favored pair,
Which would you be, — the bird of the saloon,
By lady-fingers tended with nice care,
Caressed, applauded, upon dainties fed,
Or Nature's DARKLING of this mossy shed?

1818.

XXII.

THE DANISH BOY.

A FRAGMENT.

I.

BETWEEN two sister moorland rills
There is a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flowerets of the hills,
And sacred to the sky.

And in this smooth and open dell
There is a tempest-stricken tree;
A corner-stone by lightning cut,
The last stone of a lonely hut;
And in this dell you see
A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
The shadow of a Danish Boy.

II.

In clouds above, the lark is heard,
But drops not here to earth for rest;
Within this lonesome nook the bird
Did never build her nest.
No beast, no bird, hath here his home;
Bees, wafted on the breezy air,
Pass high above those fragrant bells
To other flowers: — to other dells
Their burdens do they bear;
The Danish Boy walks here alone:
The lovely dell is all his own.

III.

A Spirit of noonday is he;
Yet seems a form of flesh and blood;
Nor piping shepherd shall he be,
Nor herdboy of the wood.
A regal vest of fur he wears,
In color like a raven's wing:
It fears not rain, nor wind, nor dew;
But in the storm 't is fresh and blue

As budding pines in Spring;
His helmet has a vernal grace,
Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

IV.

A harp is from his shoulder slung;
Resting the harp upon his knee;
To words of a forgotten tongue,
He suits its melody.
Of flocks upon the neighboring hill
He is the darling and the joy;
And often, when no cause appears,
The mountain ponies prick their ears,
— They hear the Danish Boy,
While in the dell he sings alone
Beside the tree and corner-stone.

V.

There sits he; in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.
The lovely Danish Boy is blest
And happy in his flowery cove:
From bloody deeds his thoughts are far;
And yet he warbles songs of war,
That seem like songs of love,
For calm and gentle is his mien;
Like a dead Boy he is serene.

1799.

XXIII.

SONG

FOR THE WANDERING JEW.

THOUGH the torrents from their fountains
Roar down many a craggy steep,
Yet they find among the mountains
Resting-places calm and deep.

Clouds that love through air to hasten,
Ere the storm its fury stills,
Helmet-like themselves will fasten
On the heads of towering hills.

What, if through the frozen centre
Of the Alps the Chamois bound,
Yet he has a home to enter
In some nook of chosen ground:

And the Sea-horse, though the ocean
Yield him no domestic cave,
Slumbers without sense of motion,
Couched upon the rocking wave.

If on windy days the Raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less she loves her haven
In the bosom of the cliff.

The fleet Ostrich, till day closes
Vagrant over desert sands,
Brooding on her eggs reposes
When chill night that care demands.

Day and night my toils redouble,
Never nearer to the goal;
Night and day, I feel the trouble
Of the Wanderer in my soul.

1809.

XXIV.

STRAY PLEASURES.

"Pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find."

By their floating mill,
That lies dead and still,
Behold yon Prisoners three,
The Miller with two Dames, on the breast of the Thames!
The platform is small, but gives room for them all
And they 're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
To their mill where it floats,
To their house and their mill tethered fast:

To the small wooden isle, where, their work to beguile,
They from morning to even take whatever is given ; —
And many a blithe day they have past.

In sight of the spires,
All alive with the fires
Of the sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance, — there are three, as jocund as free,
While they dance on the calm river's breast.

Man and Maidens wheel,
They themselves make the reel,
And their music 's a prey which they seize
It plays not for them, — what matter? 't is theirs ;
And if they had care, it has scattered their cares,
While they dance, crying, " Long as ye please."

They dance not for me,
Yet mine is their glee !
Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find
Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

The showers of the Spring
Rouse the birds, and they sing ;
If the wind do but stir for his proper delight,

Each leaf, that and this, his neighbor will kiss;
Each wave, one and t' other, speeds after his brother;
They are happy, for that is their right!

1806.

XXV.

THE PILGRIM'S DREAM;

OR, THE STAR AND THE GLOWWORM.

A Pilgrim, when the summer day
Had closed upon his weary way,
A lodging begged beneath a castle's roof;
But him the haughty Warder spurned;
And from the gate the Pilgrim turned,
To seek such covert as the field
Or heath-besprinkled copse might yield,
Or lofty wood, shower-proof.

He paced along; and, pensively,
Halting beneath a shady tree,
Whose moss-grown root might serve for couch or seat,
Fixed on a Star his upward eye;
Then from the tenant of the sky
He turned, and watched, with kindred look,
A Glowworm, in a dusky nook,
Apparent at his feet.

The murmur of a neighboring stream
Induced a soft and slumbrous dream,
A pregnant dream, within whose shadowy bounds
He recognized the earth-born Star,
And *that* which glittered from afar;
And (strange to witness!) from the frame
Of the ethereal Orb there came
Intelligible sounds.

Much did it taunt the humble Light,
That now, when day was fled, and night
Hushed the dark earth, fast closing weary eyes,
A very reptile could presume
To show her taper in the gloom,
As if in rivalship with one
Who sat a ruler on his throne
Erected in the skies.

"Exalted Star!" the Worm replied,
"Abate this unbecoming pride,
Or with a less uneasy lustre shine;
Thou shrink'st as momently thy rays
Are mastered by the breathing haze;
While neither mist, nor thickest cloud
That shapes in heaven its murky shroud,
Hath power to injure mine.

But not for this do I aspire
To match the spark of local fire,
That at my will burns on the dewy lawn,

With thy acknowledged glories; — No!
Yet, thus upbraided, I may show
What favors do attend me here,
Till, like thyself, I disappear
Before the purple dawn."

When this in modest guise was said,
Across the welkin seemed to spread
A boding sound — for aught but sleep unfit!
Hills quaked, the rivers backward ran;
That Star, so proud of late, looked wan;
And reeled with visionary stir
In the blue depth, like Lucifer
Cast headlong to the pit!

Fire raged: and, when the spangled floor
Of ancient ether was no more,
New heavens succeeded, by the dream brought
forth:
And all the happy Souls that rode
Transfigured through that fresh abode
Had heretofore, in humble trust,
Shone meekly 'mid their native dust,
The Glowworms of the earth!

This knowledge, from an Angel's voice
Proceeding, made the heart rejoice
Of him who slept upon the open lea:
Waking at morn he murmured not;
And, till life's journey closed, the spot

Was to the Pilgrim's soul endeared,
Where by that dream he had been cheered
Beneath the shady tree.

1818.

XXVI.

THE POET AND THE CAGED TURTLEDOVE.

As often as I murmur here
My half-formed melodies,
Straight from her osier mansion near
The Turtledove replies:
Though silent as a leaf before,
The captive promptly coos;
Is it to teach her own soft lore,
Or second my weak Muse?

I rather think, the gentle Dove
Is murmuring a reproof,
Displeased that I from lays of love
Have dared to keep aloof;
That I, a Bard of hill and dale,
Have carolled, fancy free,
As if nor dove nor nightingale
Had heart or voice for me.

If such thy meaning, O forbear,
Sweet Bird! to do me wrong;

Love, blessed Love, is everywhere
The spirit of my song:
'Mid grove, and by the calm fireside,
Love animates my lyre; —
That coo again! — t is not to chide,
I feel, but to inspire.

1834

XXVII.

A WREN'S NEST.

Among the dwellings framed by birds
In field or forest with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren's
In snugness may compare.

No door the tenement requires,
And seldom needs a labored roof;
Yet is it to the fiercest sun
Impervious, and storm-proof.

So warm, so beautiful withal,
In perfect fitness for its aim,
That to the Kind by special grace
Their instinct surely came.

And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,

The hermit has no finer eye
For shadowy quietness.

These find, 'mid ivied abbey-walls,
A canopy in some still nook;
Others are pent-housed by a brae
That overhangs a brook.

There to the brooding bird her mate
Warbles by fits his low, clear song;
And by the busy streamlet both
Are sung to all day long.

Or in sequestered lanes they build,
Where, till the flitting bird's return,
Her eggs within the nest repose,
Like relics in an urn.

But still, where general choice is good,
There is a better and a best;
And, among fairest objects, some
Are fairer than the rest;

This, one of those small builders proved
In a green covert, where, from out
The forehead of a pollard oak,
The leafy antlers sprout;

For she who planned the mossy lodge,
Mistrusting her evasive skill,

Had to a Primrose looked for aid
Her wishes to fulfil.

High on the trunk's projecting brow,
And fixed an infant's span above
The budding flowers, peeped forth the nest,
The prettiest of the grove!

The treasure proudly did I show
To some whose minds without disdain
Can turn to little things; but once
Looked up for it in vain:

'T is gone, — a ruthless spoiler's prey,
Who heeds not beauty, love, or song!
'T is gone! (so seemed it,) and we grieved,
Indignant at the wrong.

Just three days after, passing by
In clearer light, the moss-built cell
I saw, espied its shaded mouth;
And felt that all was well.

The Primrose for a veil had spread
The largest of her upright leaves;
And thus, for purposes benign,
A simple flower deceives.

Concealed from friends who might disturb
Thy quiet with no ill intent

Secure from evil eyes and hands
On barbarous plunder bent,

Rest, Mother-bird! and when thy young
Take flight, and thou art free to roam,
When withered is the guardian Flower,
And empty thy late home,

Think how ye prospered, thou and thine,
Amid the unviolated grove,
Housed near the growing Primrose-tuft,
In foresight, or in love.

1833.

XXVIII.

LOVE-LIES-BLEEDING.

You call it, "Love-lies-bleeding," — so you may,
Though the red Flower, not prostrate, only droops,
As we have seen it here from day to day,
From month to month, life passing not away:
A flower how rich in sadness! Even thus stoops,
(Sentient by Grecian sculpture's marvellous power)
Thus leans, with hanging brow and body bent
Earthward in uncomplaining languishment,
The dying Gladiator. So, sad Flower!
'T is Fancy guides me, willing to be led,
Though by a slender thread,)

So drooped Adonis bathed in sanguine dew
Of his death-wound, when he from innocent air
The gentlest breath of resignation drew;
While Venus in a passion of despair
Rent, weeping over him, her golden hair,
Spangled with drops of that celestial shower.
She suffered, as Immortals sometimes do;
But pangs more lasting far, *that* Lover knew
Who first, weighed down by scorn, in some lone bower
Did press this semblance of unpitied smart
Into the service of his constant heart,
His own dejection, downcast Flower! could share
With thine, and gave the mournful name which thou wilt ever bear.

XXIX.

COMPANION TO THE FOREGOING

Never enlivened with the liveliest ray
That fosters growth or checks or cheers decay,
Nor by the heaviest rain-drops more depressed,
This Flower, that first appeared as Summer's guest,
Preserves her beauty 'mid autumnal leaves
And to her mournful habits fondly cleaves.
When files of stateliest plants have ceased to bloom
One after one submitting to their doom,

When her coevals each and all are fled,
What keeps her thus reclined upon her lonesome
bed?
The old mythologists, more impressed than we
Of this late day by character in tree
Or herb, that claimed peculiar sympathy,
Or by the silent lapse of fountain clear,
Or with the language of the viewless air
By bird or beast made vocal, sought a cause
To solve the mystery, not in Nature's laws,
But in Man's fortunes. Hence a thousand tales
Sung to the plaintive lyre in Grecian vales.
Nor doubt that something of their spirit swayed
The fancy-stricken Youth or heart-sick Maid,
Who, while each stood companionless, and eyed
This undeparting Flower in crimson dyed,
Thought of a wound which death is slow to cure,
A fate that has endured and will endure,
And, patience coveting yet passion feeding,
Called the dejected Lingerer, *Love-lies-Bleeding.*

XXX.

RURAL ILLUSIONS.

SYLPH was it? or a Bird more bright
Than those of fabulous stock?
A second darted by; — and lo!
Another of the flock,

Through sunshine flitting from the bough
To nestle in the rock.
Transient deception! a gay freak
Of April's mimicries!
Those brilliant strangers, hailed with joy
Among the budding trees,
Proved last year's leaves, pushed from the spray
To frolic on the breeze.

Maternal Flora! show thy face,
And let thy hand be seen,
Thy hand here sprinkling tiny flowers,
That, as they touch the green,
Take root (so seems it), and look up
In honor of their Queen.
Yet, sooth, those little starry specks,
That not in vain aspired
To be confounded with live growths,
Most dainty, most admired,
Were only blossoms dropped from twigs
Of their own offspring tired.

Not such the World's illusive shows;
Her wingless flutterings,
Her blossoms, which, though shed, outbrave
The floweret as it springs,
For the undeceived, smile as they may,
Are melancholy things:
But gentle Nature plays her part
With ever-varying wiles,

And transient feignings with plain truth
So well she reconciles,
That those fond Idlers most are pleased
Whom oftenest she beguiles

1832.

XXXI.

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES.

THAT way look, my Infant, lo!
What a pretty baby-show!
See the Kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Withered leaves,—one, two, and three,—
From the lofty elder-tree!
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,
Eddying round and round, they sink
Softly, slowly: one might think,
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf conveyed
Sylph or Faery hither tending,—
To this lower world descending,
Each invisible and mute,
In his wavering parachute.
——But the Kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!

First at one, and then its fellow
Just as light and just as yellow;
There are many now, — now one, —
Now they stop and there are none:
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire!
With a tiger-leap half-way
Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again:
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjurer;
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.
Were her antics played in the eye
Of a thousand standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare
What would little Tabby care
For the plaudits of the crowd?
Over happy to be proud,
Over wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure!

'T is a pretty baby-treat;
Nor, I deem, for me unmeet;
Here for neither Babe nor me
Other playmate can I see.
Of the countless living things,
That with stir of feet and wings,
(In the sun or under shade,

Upon bough or grassy blade,)
And with busy revellings,
Chirp and song, and murmurings,
Made this orchard's narrow space,
And this vale, so blithe a place;
Multitudes are swept away,
Never more to breathe the day:
Some are sleeping; some in bands
Travelled into distant lands;
Others slunk to moor and wood,
Far from human neighborhood;
And, among the Kinds that keep
With us closer fellowship,
With us openly abide,
All have laid their mirth aside.

Where is he, that giddy Sprite,
Blue-cap, with his colors bright,
Who was blest as bird could be,
Feeding in the apple-tree;
Made such wanton spoil and rout,
Turning blossoms inside out;
Hung, head pointing towards the ground,
Fluttered, perched, into a round
Bound himself, and then unbound;
Lithest, gaudiest Harlequin!
Prettiest tumbler ever seen!
Light of heart, and light of limb;
What is now become of him?
Lambs, that through the mountains went

Frisking, bleating merriment,
When the year was in its prime,
They are sobered by this time.
If you look to vale or hill,
If you listen, all is still,
Save a little neighboring rill,
That from out the rocky ground
Strikes a solitary sound.
Vainly glitter hill and plain,
And the air is calm in vain;
Vainly Morning spreads the lure
Of a sky serene and pure;
Creature none can she decoy
Into open sign of joy:
Is it that they have a fear
Of the dreary season near?
Or that other pleasures be
Sweeter even than gayety?

Yet, whate'er enjoyments dwell
In the impenetrable cell
Of the silent heart which Nature
Furnishes to every creature;
Whatsoe'er we feel and know
Too sedate for outward show, —
Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty Kitten! from thy freaks, —
Spreads with such a living grace
O'er my little Dora's face:
Yes, the sight so stirs and charms

Thee, Baby, laughing in my arms,
That almost I could repine
That your transports are not mine,
That I do not wholly fare
Even as ye do, thoughtless pair!
And I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason,
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladsomeness.
Pleased by any random toy, —
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy, —
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss;
Keep the sprightly soul awake
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought,
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with Life's falling Leaf.

1804.

XXXII.

ADDRESS TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER, DORA.

ON BEING REMINDED THAT SHE WAS A MONTH OLD THAT DAY, SEPTEMBER 16.

——— Hast thou then survived,—
Mild Offspring of infirm humanity,
Meek Infant! among all forlornest things
The most forlorn, — one life of that bright star,
The second glory of the heavens? — Thou hast;
Already hast survived that great decay,
That transformation through the wide earth felt,
And by all nations. In that Being's sight
From whom the Race of human kind proceed,
A thousand years are but as yesterday;
And one day's narrow circuit is to Him
Not less capacious than a thousand years.
But what is time? What outward glory? Neither
A measure is of thee, whose claims extend
Through "heaven's eternal year." — Yet hail to thee,
Frail, feeble Monthling! — by that name, methinks,
Thy scanty breathing-time is portioned out
Not idly. — Hadst thou been of Indian birth,
Couched on a casual bed of moss and leaves,
And rudely canopied by leafy boughs,
Or to the churlish elements exposed
On the blank plains, — the coldness of the night,

Or the night's darkness, or its cheerful face
Of beauty, by the changing moon adorned,
Would, with imperious admonition, then
Have scored thine age, and punctually timed
Thine infant history, on the minds of those
Who might have wandered with thee. — Mother's love,
Nor less than mother's love in other breasts,
Will, among us warm-clad and warmly housed,
Do for thee what the finger of the heavens
Doth all too often harshly execute
For thy unblest coevals, amid wilds
Where fancy has small liberty to grace
The affections, to exalt them or refine;
And the maternal sympathy itself,
Though strong, is, in the main, a joyless tie
Of naked instinct, wound about the heart.
Happier, far happier, is thy lot and ours!
Even now — to solemnize thy helpless state,
And to enliven in the mind's regard
Thy passive beauty — parallels have risen,
Resemblances, or contrasts, that connect,
Within the region of a father's thoughts,
Thee and thy mate and sister of the sky.
And first; — thy sinless progress, through a world
By sorrow darkened and by care disturbed,
Apt likeness bears to hers, through gathered clouds,
Moving untouched in silver purity,
And cheering oft'times their reluctant gloom.
Fair are ye both, and both are free from stain:

But thou, how leisurely thou fill'st thy horn
With brightness! leaving her to post along,
And range about, disquieted in change,
And still impatient of the shape she wears.
Once up, once down the hill, one journey, Babe,
That will suffice thee; and it seems that now
Thou hast foreknowledge that such task is thine;
Thou travellest so contentedly, and sleep'st
In such heedless peace. Alas! full soon
Hath this conception, grateful to behold,
Changed countenance, like an object sullied o'er
By breathing mist; and thine appears to be
A mournful labor, while to her is given
Hope, and a renovation without end.
— That smile forbids the thought; for on thy face
Smiles are beginning, like the beams of dawn,
To shoot and circulate; smiles have there been
seen;
Tranquil assurances that Heaven supports
The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers
Thy loneliness: or shall those smiles be called
Feelers of love, put forth as if to explore
This untried world, and to prepare thy way
Through a strait passage intricate and dim?
Such are they; and the same are tokens, signs,
Which, when the appointed season hath arrived
Joy, as her holiest language, shall adopt;
And Reason's godlike Power be proud to own.

1804

XXXIII.

THE WAGONER.

"In Cairo's crowded streets
The impatient Merchant, wondering, waits in vain,
And Mecca saddens at the long delay."

THOMSON.

TO CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND: —

WHEN I sent you, a few weeks ago, the Tale of Peter Bell, you asked why THE WAGONER was not added. — To say the truth, — from the higher tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of passion aimed at in the former, I apprehended this little Piece could not accompany it without disadvantage. In the year 1806, if I am not mistaken, THE WAGONER was read to you in manuscript, and, as you have remembered it for so long a time, I am the more encouraged to hope, that, since the localities on which the Poem partly depends did not prevent its being interesting to you, it may prove acceptable to others. Being therefore in some measure the cause of its present appearance, you must allow me the gratification of inscribing it to you; in acknowledgment of the pleasure I have derived from your Writings, and of the high esteem with which

I am very truly yours,
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

RYDAL MOUNT, *May* 20, 1819.

CANTO FIRST.

'T IS spent, — this burning day of June!
Soft darkness o'er its latest gleams is stealing
The buzzing dor-hawk, round and round is
wheeling, —

That solitary bird
Is all that can be heard
In silence deeper far than that of deepest noon!

Confiding Glowworms, 't is a night
Propitious to your earth-born light!
But, where the scattered stars are seen
In hazy straits the clouds between,
Each, in his station twinkling not,
Seems changed into a pallid spot.
The mountains against heaven's grave weight
Rise up, and grow to wondrous height.
The air, as in a lion's den,
Is close and hot; — and now and then
Comes a tired and sultry breeze,
With a haunting and a panting,
Like the stifling of disease;
But the dews allay the heat,
And the silence makes it sweet.

Hush, there is some one on the stir!
'T is Benjamin the Wagoner;
Who long hath trod this toilsome way,
Companion of the night and day.
That far-off tinkling's drowsy cheer,
Mixed with a faint yet grating sound
In a moment lost and found,
The Wain announces, — by whose side
Along the banks of Rydal Mere
He paces on, a trusty Guide.

Listen! you can scarcely hear!
Hither he his course is bending; —
Now he leaves the lower ground,
And, up the craggy hill ascending,
Many a stop and stay he makes,
Many a breathing-fit he takes: —
Steep the way and wearisome,
Yet all the while his whip is dumb!

The Horses have worked with right good-will,
And so have gained the top of the hill;
He was patient, they were strong,
And now they smoothly glide along,
Recovering breath, and pleased to win
The praises of mild Benjamin.
Heaven shield him from mishap and snare!
But why so early with this prayer?
Is it for threatenings in the sky?
Or for some other danger nigh?
No; none is near him yet, though he
Be one of much infirmity;
For at the bottom of the brow,
Where once the DOVE and OLIVE-BOUGH
Offered a greeting of good ale
To all who entered Grasmere Vale,
And called on him who must depart
To leave it with a jovial heart, —
There, where the DOVE and OLIVE-BOUGH
Once hung, a Poet harbors now,
A simple water-drinking Bard

Why need our Hero then (though frail
His best resolves) be on his guard?
He marches by, secure and bold;
Yet while he thinks on times of old,
It seems that all looks wondrous cold;
He shrugs his shoulders, shakes his head,
And, for the honest folk within,
It is a doubt with Benjamin
Whether they be alive or dead!

Here is no danger, — none at all!
Beyond his wish he walks secure;
But pass a mile — and *then* for trial, —
Then for the pride of self-denial;
If he resist that tempting door,
Which with such friendly voice will call;
If he resist those casement panes,
And that bright gleam which thence will fall
Upon his Leaders' bells and manes,
Inviting him with cheerful lure:
For still, though all be dark elsewhere,
Some shining notice will be *there*,
Of open house and ready fare.

The place to Benjamin right well
Is known, and by as strong a spell
As used to be that sign of love
And hope, — the OLIVE-BOUGH and DOVE;
He knows it to his cost, good Man!
Who does not know the famous SWAN?

Object uncouth! and yet our boast,
For it was painted by one Host;
His own conceit the figure planned,
'T was colored all by his own hand;
And that frail Child of thirsty clay,
Of whom I sing this rustic lay,
Could tell with self-dissatisfaction
Quaint stories of the bird's attraction?*

Well! that is past, — and in despite
Of open door and shining light.
And now the conqueror essays
The long ascent of Dunmail-raise;
And with his team is gentle here
As when he clomb from Rydal Mere;
His whip they do not dread, — his voice
They only hear it to rejoice.
To stand or go is at *their* pleasure;
Their efforts and their time they measure
By generous pride within the breast;
And while they strain, and while they rest,
He thus pursues his thoughts at leisure.

Now am I fairly safe to-night, —
And with proud cause my heart is light:
I trespassed lately worse than ever, —
But Heaven has blest a good endeavor;

* This rude piece of self-taught art (such is the progress of refinement) has been supplanted by a professional production

And, to my soul's content, I find
The Evil One is left behind.
Yes, let my master fume and fret,
Here am I — with my horses yet!
My jolly team, he finds that ye
Will work for nobody but me!
Full proof of this the Country gained;
It knows how ye were vexed and strained,
And forced unworthy stripes to bear,
When trusted to another's care.
Here was it, on this rugged slope,
Which now ye climb with heart and hope,
I saw you, between rage and fear,
Plunge, and fling back a spiteful ear,
And ever more and more confused,
As ye were more and more abused:
As chance would have it, passing by,
I saw you in that jeopardy:
A word from me was like a charm;
Ye pulled together with one mind;
And your huge burden, safe from harm,
Moved like a vessel in the wind!
— Yes, without me, up hills so high
'T is vain to strive for mastery.
Then grieve not, jolly team! though tough
The road we travel, steep, and rough;
Though Rydal heights and Dunmail-raise,
And all their fellow banks and braes,
Full often make you stretch and strain,
And halt for breath and halt again,

Yet to their sturdiness 't is owing
That side by side we still are going!

While Benjamin in earnest mood
His meditations thus pursued,
A storm, which had been smothered long,
Was growing inwardly more strong;
And, in its struggles to get free,
Was busily employed as he.
The thunder had begun to growl, —
He heard not, too intent of soul;
The air was now without a breath, —
He marked not that 't was still as death.
But soon large rain-drops on his head
Fell with the weight of drops of lead; —
He starts, — and takes, at the admonition,
A sage survey of his condition.
The road is black before his eyes,
Glimmering faintly where it lies;
Black is the sky, — and every hill,
Up to the sky, is blacker still, —
Sky, hill, and dale, one dismal room,
Hung round and overhung with gloom;
Save that above a single height
Is to be seen a lurid light,
Above Helm-crag,* — a streak half dead,
A burning of portentous red;

* A mountain of Grasmere, the broken summit of which presents two figures, full as distinctly shaped as that of the famous Cobbler near Arroquhar in Scotland.

And near that lurid light, full well
The ASTROLOGER, sage Sidrophel,
Where at his desk and book he sits,
Puzzling aloft his curious wits;
He whose domain is held in common
With no one but the ANCIENT WOMAN,
Cowering beside her rifted cell,
As if intent on magic spell; —
Dread pair, that, spite of wind and weather,
Still sit upon Helm-crag together.

The ASTROLOGER was not unseen
By solitary Benjamin;
But total darkness came anon,
And he and everything was gone:
And suddenly a ruffling breeze
(That would have rocked the sounding trees
Had aught of sylvan growth been there)
Swept through the Hollow long and bare:
The rain rushed down, — the road was battered,
As with the force of billows shattered;
The horses are dismayed, nor know
Whether they should stand or go;
And Benjamin is groping near them,
Sees nothing, and can scarcely hear them.
He is astounded — wonder not —
With such a charge in such a spot;
Astounded in the mountain gap
With thunder-peals, clap after clap,
Close-treading on the silent flashes, —

And somewhere, as he thinks, by crashes
Among the rocks; with weight of rain,
And sullen motions long and slow,
That to a dreary distance go,
Till, breaking in upon the dying strain,
A rending o'er his head begins the fray again.

Meanwhile, uncertain what to do,
And oftentimes compelled to halt,
The horses cautiously pursue
Their way, without mishap or fault;
And now have reached that pile of stones,
Heaped over brave King Dunmail's bones,
He who had once supreme command,
Last king of rocky Cumberland;
His bones, and those of all his power,
Slain here in a disastrous hour!

When, passing through this narrow strait,
Stony, and dark, and desolate,
Benjamin can faintly hear
A voice that comes from some one near,
A female voice: — "Whoe'er you be,
Stop," it exclaimed, "and pity me!"
And, less in pity than in wonder,
Amid the darkness and the thunder,
The Wagoner, with prompt command,
Summons his horses to a stand.

While, with increasing agitation,
The Woman urged her supplication.

In rueful words, with sobs between, —
The voice of tears that fell unseen;
There came a flash, a startling glare,
And all Seat-Sandal was laid bare!
'T is not a time for nice suggestion,
And Benjamin, without a question,
Taking her for some way-worn rover,
Said, "Mount, and get you under cover!"

Another voice, in tone as hoarse
As a swollen brook with rugged course,
Cried out, "Good brother, why so fast?
I 've had a glimpse of you, — *avast!*
Or, since it suits you to be civil,
Take her at once — for good and evil!"

"It is my Husband," softly said
The Woman, as if half afraid:
By this time she was snug within,
Through help of honest Benjamin;
She and her Babe, which to her breast
With thankfulness the Mother pressed;
And now the same strong voice more near
Said cordially, "My Friend, what cheer?
Rough doings these! as God 's my judge,
The sky owes somebody a grudge!
We 've had in half an hour or less
A twelvemonth's terror and distress!"

Then Benjamin entreats the Man
Would mount, too, quickly as he can:

The Sailor — Sailor now no more,
But such he had been heretofore —
To courteous Benjamin replied,
" Go you your way, and mind not me,
For I must have, whate'er betide,
My Ass and fifty things beside, - -
Go, and I 'll follow speedily ! "

The Wagon moves, and with its load
Descends along the sloping road ;
And the rough Sailor instantly
Turns to a little tent hard by :
For when, at closing-in of day,
The family had come that way,
Green pasture and the soft warm air
Tempted them to settle there. —
Green is the grass for beast to graze,
Around the stones of Dunmail-raise !

The Sailor gathers up his bed,
Takes down the canvas overhead,
And, after farewell to the place,
A parting word, though not of grace,
Pursues, with Ass and all his store,
The way the Wagon went before.

CANTO SECOND.

If Wytheburn's modest House of prayer,
As lowly as the lowliest dwelling,
Had, with its belfry's humble stock,
A little pair that hang in air,
Been mistress also of a clock,
(And one, too, not in crazy plight,)
Twelve strokes that clock would have been telling
Under the brow of old Helvellyn —
Its bead-roll of midnight —
Then, when the Hero of my tale
Was passing by, and down the vale
(The vale now silent, hushed I ween
As if a storm had never been)
Proceeding with a mind at ease;
While the old Familiar of the seas,
Intent to use his utmost haste,
Gained ground upon the Wagon fast,
And gives another lusty cheer;
For spite of rumbling of the wheels,
A welcome greeting he can hear; —
It is a fiddle in its glee
Dinning from the Cherry-Tree!

Thence the sound, — the light is there, —
As Benjamin is now aware,
Who, to his inward thoughts confined,
Had almost reached the festive door,
When, startled by the Sailor's roar,

He hears a sound and sees the light,
And in a moment calls to mind
That 't is the village MERRY-NIGHT! *

Although before in no dejection,
At this insidious recollection
His heart with sudden joy is filled, —
His ears are by the music thrilled,
His eyes take pleasure in the road
Glittering before him bright and broad;
And Benjamin is wet and cold,
And there are reasons manifold
That make the good, tow'rds which he 's yearning,
Look fairly like a lawful earning.

Nor has thought time to come and go,
To vibrate between yes and no;
For, cries the Sailor, "Glorious chance
That blew us hither! — let him dance,
Who can or will! — my honest soul,
Our treat shall be a friendly bowl!"
He draws him to the door, — "Come in,
Come, come," cries he to Benjamin!
And Benjamin — ah, woe is me! —
Gave the word; the horses heard
And halted, though reluctantly.

* A term well known in the North of England, and applied to rural festivals where young persons meet in the evening for the purpose of dancing.

"Blithe souls and lightsome hearts have we,
Feasting at the CHERRY-TREE!"
This was the outside proclamation,
This was the inside salutation;
What bustling — jostling — high and low!
A universal overflow!
What tankards foaming from the tap!
What store of cakes in every lap!
What thumping — stumping — overhead!
The thunder had not been more busy:
With such a stir, you would have said,
This little place may well be dizzy!
'T is who can dance with greatest vigor, —
'T is what can be most prompt and eager;
As if it heard the fiddle's call,
The pewter clatters on the wall;
The very bacon shows it feeling,
Swinging from the smoky ceiling!

A steaming bowl, a blazing fire,
What greater good can heart desire?
'T were worth a wise man's while to try
The utmost anger of the sky,
To *seek* for thoughts of a gloomy cast,
If such the bright amends at last.
Now should you say I judge amiss,
The CHERRY-TREE shows proof of this;
For soon, of all the happy there,
Our travellers are the happiest pair;
All care with Benjamin is gone, —

A Cæsar past the Rubicon!
He thinks not of his long, long strife; —
The Sailor, Man by nature gay,
Hath no resolves to throw away;
And he hath now forgot his Wife,
Hath quite forgotten her — or may be
Thinks her the luckiest soul on earth,
Within that warm and peaceful berth,
Under cover,
Terror over,
Sleeping by her sleeping Baby.

With bowl that sped from hand to hand,
The gladdest of the gladsome band,
Amid their own delight and fun,
They hear — when every dance is done,
When every whirling bout is o'er —
The fiddle's *squeak*,* — that call to bliss,
Ever followed by a kiss;
They envy not the happy lot,
But enjoy their own the more!

While thus our jocund Travellers fare,
Up springs the Sailor from his chair, —
Limps (for I might have told before
That he was lame) across the floor, —
Is gone, — returns, — and with a prize;

* At the close of each strathspey, or jig, a particular note from the fiddle summons the Rustic to the agreeable duty of saluting his partner.

With what? — a Ship of lusty size;
A gallant, stately Man-of-war,
Fixed on a smoothly sliding car.
Surprise to all, but most surprise
To Benjamin, who rubs his eyes,
Not knowing that he had befriended
A Man so gloriously attended!

"This," cries the Sailor, "a Third-rate is,
Stand back, and you shall see her gratis!
This was the Flag-ship at the Nile,
The Vanguard, — you may smirk and smile,
But, pretty Maid, if you look near,
You 'll find you 've much in little here!
A nobler ship did never swim,
And you shall see her in full trim:
I 'll set, my friends, to do you honor,
Set every inch of sail upon her."
So said, so done; and masts, sails, yards,
He names them all; and interlards
His speech with uncouth terms of art,
Accomplished in the showman's part;
And then, as from a sudden check,
Cries out, — "'T is there, the quarter-deck
On which brave Admiral Nelson stood, —
A sight that would have roused your blood!
One eye he had, which, bright as ten,
Burned like a fire among his men;
Let this be land, and that be sea,
Here lay the French — and *thus* came we!"

Hushed was by this the fiddle's sound,
The dancers all were gathered round,
And, such the stillness of the house,
You might have heard a nibbling mouse;
While, borrowing helps where'er he may,
The Sailor through the story runs
Of ships to ships and guns to guns;
And does his utmost to display
The dismal conflict, and the might
And terror of that marvellous night!
"A bowl, a bowl of double measure,"
Cries Benjamin, "a draught of length,
To Nelson, England's pride and treasure,
Her bulwark and her tower of strength!"
When Benjamin had seized the bowl,
The mastiff, from beneath the wagon,
Where he lay, watchful as a dragon,
Rattled his chain; — t' was all in vain,
For Benjamin, triumphant soul!
He heard a monitory growl;
Heard, — and in opposition quaffed
A deep, determined, desperate draught!
Nor did the battered Tar forget,
Or flinch from what he deemed his debt:
Then, like a hero crowned with laurel,
Back to her place the ship he led;
Wheeled her back in full apparel;
And so, flag flying at masthead,
Re-yoked her to the Ass: — anon,
Cries Benjamin, "We must be gone."

Thus, after two hours' hearty stay,
Again behold them on their way!

CANTO THIRD.

RIGHT gladly had the horses stirred,
When they the wished-for greeting heard,
The whip's loud notice from the door,
That they were free to move once more.
You think, those doings must have bred
In them disheartening doubts and dread:
No, not a horse of all the eight,
Although it be a moonless night,
Fears either for himself or freight;
For this they know, (and let it hide,
In part, the offences of their guide,)
That Benjamin, with clouded brains,
Is worth the best with all their pains;
And if they had a prayer to make,
The prayer would be that they may take
With him whatever comes in course,
The better fortune or the worse;
That no one else may have business near them
And, drunk or sober, he may steer them.

So, forth in dauntless mood they fare,
And with them goes the guardian pair.

Now, heroes, for the true commotion,
The triumph of your late devotion!

Can aught on earth impede delight,
Still mounting to a higher height;
And higher still, — a greedy flight!
Can any low-born care pursue her,
Can any mortal clog come to her?
No notion have they, — not a thought,
That is from joyless regions brought!
And, while they coast the silent lake,
Their inspiration I partake;
Share their empyreal spirits, — yea,
With their enraptured vision, see —
O fancy — what a jubilee!
What shifting pictures, clad in gleams
Of color bright as feverish dreams!
Earth, spangled sky, and lake serene,
Involved and restless all, — a scene
Pregnant with mutual exaltation,
Rich change, and multiplied creation!
This sight to me the Muse imparts; —
And then, what kindness in their hearts
What tears of rapture, what vow-making,
Profound entreaties, and hand-shaking!
What solemn, vacant interlacing,
As if they 'd fall asleep embracing!
Then, in the turbulence of glee,
And in the excess of amity,
Says Benjamin, "That Ass of thine,
He spoils thy sport, and hinders mine:
If he were tethered to the wagon,
He 'd drag as well what he is dragging;

And we, as brother should with brother,
Might trudge it alongside each other!"

Forthwith, obedient to command,
The horses made a quiet stand;
And to the wagon's skirts was tied
The Creature, by the Mastiff's side,
The Mastiff wondering, and perplexed
With dread of what will happen next;
And thinking it but sorry cheer
To have such company so near!

This new arrangement made, the Wain
Through the still night proceeds again;
No Moon hath risen her light to lend;
But indistinctly may be kenned
The VANGUARD, following close behind,
Sails spread, as if to catch the wind!

"Thy wife and child are snug and warm,
Thy ship will travel without harm;
I like," said Benjamin, "her shape and stature
And this of mine, — this bulky creature
Of which I have the steering, — this,
Seen fairly, is not much amiss!
We want your streamers, friend, you know;
But altogether, as we go,
We make a kind of handsome show!
Among these hills, from first to last,
We 've weathered many a furious blast;

Hard passage forcing on, with head
Against the storm, and canvas spread.
I hate a boaster; but to thee
Will say 't, who know'st both land and sea,
The unluckiest hulk that stems the brine
Is hardly worse beset than mine,
When cross-winds on her quarter beat;
And, fairly lifted from my feet,
I stagger onward, Heaven knows how;
But not so pleasantly as now:
Poor pilot I, by snows confounded,
And many a foundrous pit surrounded!
Yet here we are, by night and day
Grinding through rough and smooth our way;
Through foul and fair our task fulfilling;
And long shall be so yet, — God willing!"

"Ay," said the Tar, "through fair and foul—
But save us from yon screeching owl!"
That instant was begun a fray
Which called their thoughts another way:
The Mastiff, ill-conditioned carle!
What must he do but growl and snarl,
Still more and more dissatisfied
With the meek comrade at his side!
Till, not incensed though put to proof,
The Ass, uplifting a hind hoof,
Salutes the Mastiff on the head;
And so were better manners bred,
And all was calmed and quieted.

"Yon screech-owl," says the Sailor, turning
Back to his former cause of mourning,
"Yon owl! — pray God that all be well!
'T is worse than any funeral bell;
As sure as I 've the gift of sight,
We shall be meeting ghosts to-night!"
— Said Benjamin, "This whip shall lay
A thousand, if they cross our way.
I know that Wanton's noisy station,
I know him and his occupation;
The jolly bird hath learned his cheer
Upon the banks of Windermere;
Where a tribe of them make merry,
Mocking the man that keeps the ferry;
Hallooing from an open throat,
Like travellers shouting for a boat.
— The tricks he learned at Windermere
This vagrant owl is playing here, —
That is the worst of his employment:
He 's at the top of his enjoyment!"

This explanation stilled the alarm,
Cured the foreboder like a charm;
This, and the manner, and the voice,
Summoned the Sailor to rejoice;
His heart is up, — he fears no evil
From life or death, from man or devil;
He wheels, — and, making many stops,
Brandished his crutch against the mountain-tops;
And, while he talked of blows and scars,

Benjamin, among the stars,
Beheld a dancing, and a glancing;
Such retreating and advancing
As, I ween, was never seen
In bloodiest battle since the days of Mars!

CANTO FOURTH.

Thus they, with freaks of proud delight,
Beguile the remnant of the night;
And many a snatch of jovial song
Regales them as they wind along;
While to the music, from on high,
The echoes make a glad reply. —
But the sage Muse the revel heeds
No farther than her story needs;
Nor will she servilely attend
The loitering journey to its end.
— Blithe spirits of her own impel
The Muse, who scents the morning air,
To take of this transported pair
A brief and unreproved farewell;
To quit the slow-paced wagon's side,
And wander down the hawthorn dell,
With murmuring Greta for her guide.
— There doth she ken the awful form
Of Raven-crag — black as a storm —
Glimmering through the twilight pale;

And Glimmer-crag,* his tall twin brother,
Each peering forth to meet the other: —
And, while she roves through St. John's Vale,
Along the smooth, unpathwayed plain,
By sheep-track or through cottage lane,
Where no disturbance comes to intrude
Upon the pensive solitude,
Her unsuspecting eye, perchance,
With the rude shepherd's favored glance,
Beholds the Faeries in array,
Whose party-colored garments gay
The silent company betray:
Red, green, and blue; a moment's sight!
For Skiddaw-top with rosy light
Is touched, — and all the band take flight.
— Fly also, Muse! and from the dell
Mount to the ridge of Nathdale Fell;
Thence, look thou forth o'er wood and lawn
Hoar with the frost-like dews of dawn;
Across yon meadowy bottom look,
Where close fogs hide their parent brook;
And see, beyond that hamlet small,
The ruined towers of Threlkeld Hall,
Lurking in a double shade,
By trees and lingering twilight made!
There, at Blencathara's rugged feet,
Sir Lancelot gave a safe retreat
To noble Clifford; from annoy

* The crag of the ewe lamb.

Concealed the persecuted boy,
Well pleased in rustic garb to feed
His flock, and pipe on shepherd's reed
Among this multitude of hills,
Crags, woodlands, waterfalls, and rills;
Which soon the morning shall enfold,
From east to west, in ample vest
Of massy gloom and radiance bold.

The mists, that o'er the streamlet's bed
Hung low, begin to rise and spread;
Even while I speak, their skirts of gray
Are smitten by a silver ray;
And lo! — up Castrigg's naked steep
(Where, smoothly urged, the vapors sweep
Along, and scatter and divide,
Like fleecy clouds self-multiplied)
The stately wagon is ascending,
With faithful Benjamin attending,
Apparent now beside his team, —
Now lost amid a glittering steam:
And with him goes his Sailor-friend,
By this time near their journey's end;
And, after their high-minded riot,
Sickening into thoughtful quiet:
As if the morning's pleasant hour,
Had for their joys a killing power.
And, sooth, for Benjamin a vein
Is opened of still deeper pain,
As if his heart by notes were stung

From out the lowly hedge-rows flung;
As if the warbler lost in light
Reproved his soarings of the night,
In strains of rapture pure and holy
Upbraided his distempered folly.

Drooping is he, his step is dull;
But the horses stretch and pull;
With increasing vigor climb,
Eager to repair lost time;
Whether, by their own desert,
Knowing what cause there is for shame,
They are laboring to avert
As much as may be of the blame,
Which, they foresee, must soon alight
Upon *his* head, whom, in despite
Of all his failings, they love best;
Whether for him they are distrest;
Or, by length of fasting roused,
Are impatient to be housed:
Up against the hill they strain,
Tugging at the iron chain,
Tugging all with might and main,
Last and foremost, every horse
To the utmost of his force!
And the smoke and respiration,
Rising like an exhalation,
Blend with the mist, a moving shroud
To form, an undissolving cloud;
Which, with slant ray, the merry sun

Takes delight to play upon.
Never golden-haired Apollo,
Pleased some favorite chief to follow
Through accidents of peace or war,
In a perilous moment threw
Around the object of his care
Veil of such celestial hue;
Interposed so bright a screen —
Him and his enemies between!

Alas! what boots it? —who can hide,
When the malicious Fates are bent
On working out an ill intent?
Can destiny be turned aside?
No, — sad progress of my story!
Benjamin, this outward glory
Cannot shield thee from thy Master,
Who from Keswick has pricked forth
Sour and surly as the north;
And, in fear of some disaster,
Comes to give what help he may,
And to hear what thou canst say;
If, as needs he must forebode,
Thou hast been loitering on the road!
His fears, his doubts, may now take flight, —
The wished-for object is in sight:
Yet, trust the Muse, it rather hath
Stirred him up to livelier wrath;
Which he stifles, moody man!
With all the patience that he can;

To the end that, at your meeting,
He may give thee decent greeting.

There he is, — resolved to stop
Till the wagon gains the top;
But stop he cannot, — must advance:
Him Benjamin, with lucky glance,
Espies, — and instantly is ready,
Self-collected, poised, and steady:
And, to be the better seen,
Issues from his radiant shroud,
From his close-attending cloud,
With careless air and open mien.
Erect his port, and firm his going;
So struts yon cock that now is crowing;
And the morning light in grace
Strikes upon his lifted face,
Hurrying the pallid hue away
That might his trespasses betray.
But what can all avail to clear him,
Or what need of explanation,
Parley, or interrogation?
For the Master sees, alas!
That unhappy Figure near him,
Limping o'er the dewy grass,
Where the road it fringes, sweet,
Soft, and cool to way-worn feet;
And, O indignity! an Ass,
By his noble Mastiff's side,
Tethered to the wagon's tail:

And the ship, in all her pride,
Following after in full sail!
Not to speak of babe and mother;
Who, contented with each other,
And snug as birds in leafy arbor,
Find, within, a blessed harbor!

With eager eyes the Master pries;
Looks in and out, and through and through;
Says nothing — till at last he spies
A wound upon the Mastiff's head,
A wound, where plainly might be read
What feats an Ass's hoof can do!
But drop the rest: — this aggravation,
This complicated provocation,
A hoard of grievances unsealed;
All past forgiveness it repealed;
And thus, and through distempered blood
On both sides, Benjamin the good,
The patient, and the tender-hearted,
Was from his team and wagon parted;
When duty of that day was o'er,
Laid down his whip — and served no more. —
Nor could the wagon long survive,
Which Benjamin had ceased to drive.
It lingered on; — guide after guide
Ambitiously the office tried;
But each unmanageable hill
Called for *his* patience and *his* skill; —
And sure it is, that through this night,

And what the morning brought to light,
Two losses had we to sustain,
We lost both WAGONER and WAIN!

Accept, O Friend, for praise or blame,
The gift of this adventurous song;
A record which I dared to frame,
Though timid scruples checked me long;
They checked me, — and I left the theme
Untouched; — in spite of many a gleam
Of fancy which thereon was shed,
Like pleasant sunbeams shifting still
Upon the side of a distant hill:
But Nature might not be gainsaid;
For what I have and what I miss
I sing of these; — it makes my bliss!
Nor is it I who play the part,
But a shy spirit in my heart,
That comes and goes, — will sometimes leap
From hiding-places ten years deep;
Or haunts me with familiar face,
Returning, like a ghost unlaid,
Until the debt I owe be paid.
Forgive me, then; for I had been
On friendly terms with this Machine:
In him, while he was wont to trace
Our roads, through many a long year's space
A living almanac had we;
We had a speaking diary,

That in this uneventful place
Gave to the days a mark and name
By which we knew them when they came.
— Yes, I, and all about me here,
Through all the changes of the year,
Had seen him through the mountains go,
In pomp of mist or pomp of snow,
Majestically huge and slow:
Or, with a milder grace adorning
The landscape of a summer's morning;
While Grasmere smoothed her liquid plain
The moving image to detain;
And mighty Fairfield, with a chime
Of echoes, to his march kept time;
When little other business stirred,
And little other sound was heard;
In that delicious hour of balm,
Stillness, solitude, and calm,
While yet the valley is arrayed,
On this side with a sober shade,
On that is prodigally bright —
Crag, lawn, and wood — with rosy light.
— But most of all, thou lordly Wain!
I wish to have thee here again,
When windows flap and chimney roars,
And all is dismal out of doors;
And, sitting by my fire, I see
Eight sorry carts, no less a train!
Unworthy successors of thee,
Come straggling through the wind and rain.

And oft, as they pass slowly on,
Beneath my windows, one by one,
See, perched upon the naked height,
The summit of a cumbrous freight,
A single traveller, — and there
Another; then perhaps a pair, —
The lame, the sickly, and the old;
Men, women, heartless with the cold;
And babes in wet and starveling plight;
Which once, be weather as it might,
Had still a nest within a nest,
Thy shelter — and their mother's breast!
Then most of all, then far the most,
Do I regret what we have lost;
Am grieved for that unhappy sin
Which robbed us of good Benjamin; —
And of his stately Charge, which none
Could keep alive when He was gone!

1805

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

I.

THERE WAS A BOY.

THERE was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander! — many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him. — And they would
shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, — with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill,
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice

Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Preëminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village school;
And, thro' that churchyard when my way has led
On summer evenings, I believe that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute, — looking at the grave in which he lies!

1799.

II.

TO THE CUCKOO.

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my schoolboy days
I listened to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways,
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for thee!

III.

A NIGHT PIECE.

——— The sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,
Checkering the ground, from rock, plant, tree or tower.
At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up, — the clouds are split
Asunder, — and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small,
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not! — the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent; — still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

1798.

IV.

AIREY-FORCE VALLEY.

——— Not a breath of air
Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen.
From the brook's margin, wide around, the trees
Are steadfast as the rocks; the brook itself,
Old as the hills that feed it from afar,
Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm
Where all things else are still and motionless.
And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance
Escaped from boisterous winds that rage without,
Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt,
But to its gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash! that, pendent from the brow
Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,
Powerful almost as vocal harmony
To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe his
thoughts.

V.

YEW-TREES.

There is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst

Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore:
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poictiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree! a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane; — a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially, — beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries, ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow; — there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose

To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

1803.

VI.

NUTTING.

——It seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days that cannot die;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
I left our cottage-threshold, sal'ying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps
Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
Which for that service had been husbanded
By exhortation of my frugal dame, —
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles, — and, in truth,
More raggèd than need was! O'er pathless rocks,
Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,
Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation; but the hazels rose

Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
A virgin scene! — A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet; — or beneath the trees I sat
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played
A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons reappear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,
And — with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep —
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage: and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being: and, unless I now

Confound my present feelings with the past
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—
Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch, — for there is a spirit in the woods.

1799

VII.

THE SIMPLON PASS.

——— Brook and road
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow step. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,

Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light —
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

1799.

VIII.

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;

For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

1804.

IX.

O NIGHTINGALE! thou surely art
A creature of a "fiery heart":—
These notes of thine,—they pierce and pierce
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze:
He did not cease; but cooed — and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
That was the song, — the song for me!

1806.

X.

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute, insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see,
Even in the motions of the Storm,
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake.—The work was done.
How soon my Lucy's race was run!

She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

1799.

XI.

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

1799.

XII.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed, — and gazed, — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

1804

XIII.

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN.

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

'T is a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapor through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale.
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colors have all passed away from her eyes!

1797.

XIV.

POWER OF MUSIC.

An Orpheus! an Orpheus! yes, Faith may grow
bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of old; —
Near the stately Pantheon you 'll meet with the
same
In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its
name.

His station is there; and he works on the crowd,
He sways them with harmony merry and loud;
He fills with his power all their hearts to the
brim, —
Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and him?

What an eager assembly! what an empire is this!
The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss;
The mourner is cheered, and the anxious have
rest;
And the guilt-burdened soul is no longer opprest.

As the Moon brightens round her the clouds of the
night,
So He, where he stands, is a centre of light;
It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-browed Jack,
And the pale-visaged Baker's, with basket on back.

That errand-bound 'Prentice was passing in haste,—
What matter! he 's caught, — and his time runs to
waste;
The Newsman is stopped, though he stops on the
fret;
And the half-breathless Lamp-lighter, — he 's in
the net!

The Porter sits down on the weight which he bore;
The Lass with her barrow wheels hither her
store; —
If a thief could be here, he might pilfer at ease;
She sees the Musician, 't is all that she sees!

He stands, backed by the wall; — he abates not
his din; —
His hat gives him vigor, with boons dropping in,
From the old and the young, from the poorest;
and there!
The one-pennied Boy has his penny to spare.

O blest are the hearers, and proud be the hand
Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a
band!
I am glad for him, blind as he is! — all the while
If they speak 't is to praise, and they praise with
a smile.

That tall Man, a giant in bulk and in height,
Not an inch of his body is free from delight;

Can he keep himself still, if he would? O not he!
The music stirs in him like wind through a tree.

Mark that Cripple who leans on his crutch; like
a tower
That long has leaned forward, leans hour after
hour. —
That Mother, whose spirit in fetters is bound,
While she dandles the Babe in her arms to the
sound.

Now, coaches and chariots! roar on like a stream;
Here are twenty souls happy as souls in a dream:
They are deaf to your murmurs, — they care not
for you,
Nor what ye are flying, nor what ye pursue!

1806.

XV.

STAR-GAZERS.

WHAT crowd is this? what have we here? we must
not pass it by;
A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky:
Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
Some little pleasure skiff, that doth on Thames's
waters float.

The Showman chooses well his place, 't is Leicester's busy Square,
And is as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and fair;
Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each stands ready with the fee,
And envies him that 's looking; — what an insight must it be!

Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause? Shall thy Implement have blame,
A boaster, that, when he is tried, fails, and is put to shame?
Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon resplendent vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
The silver moon with all her vales, and hills of mightiest fame,
Doth she betray us when they 're seen? or are they but a name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her wrong?

Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long
have had,
And are returned into themselves, they cannot
but be sad?

Or must we be constrained to think that these
Spectators rude,
Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the mul-
titude,
Have souls which never yet have risen, and there-
fore prostrate lie?
No, no, this cannot be; — men thirst for power
and majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the bliss-
ful mind employ
Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and
steady joy,
That doth reject all show of pride, admits no out-
ward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and
divine!

Whatever be the cause, 't is sure that they who
pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy
than before:
One after one they take their turn, nor have I one
espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

1806.

XVI.

WRITTEN IN MARCH,

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF BROTHER'S WATER.

THE Cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The Ploughboy is whooping — anon — anon
There 's joy in the mountains;
There 's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

1801.

XVII.

LYRE! though such power do in thy magic live
As might from India's farthest plain
Recall the not unwilling Maid,
Assist me to detain
The lovely Fugitive:
Check with thy notes the impulse which, betrayed
By her sweet farewell looks, I longed to aid.
Here let me gaze enrapt upon that eye,
The impregnable and awe-inspiring fort
Of contemplation, the calm port
By reason fenced from winds that sigh
Among the restless sails of vanity.
But if no wish be hers that we should part,
A humbler bliss would satisfy my heart.
Where all things are so fair,
Enough by her dear side to breathe the air
Of this Elysian weather;
And, on or in, or near, the brook, espy
Shade upon the sunshine lying
Faint and somewhat pensively;
And downward Image gayly vying
With its upright living tree
Mid silver clouds, and openings of blue sky
As soft almost and deep as her cerulean eye.

Nor less the joy with many a glance
Cast up the Stream or down at her beseeching,

To mark its eddying foam-balls prettily distrest
By ever-changing shape and want of rest;
Or watch, with mutual teaching,
The current as it plays
In flashing leaps and stealthy creeps
Adown a rocky maze;
Or note (translucent Summer's happiest chance!
In the slope-channel floored with pebbles bright,
Stones of all hues, gem emulous of gem,
So vivid that they take from keenest sight
The liquid veil that seeks not to hide them.

XVIII.

BEGGARS.

She had a tall man's height or more;
Her face from Summer's noontide heat
No bonnet shaded, but she wore
A mantle, to her very feet
Descending with a graceful flow,
And on her head a cap as white as new-fallen snow

Her skin was of Egyptian brown:
Haughty, as if her eye had seen
Its own light to a distance thrown,
She towered, fit person for a Queen
To lead those ancient Amazonian files;
Or ruling Bandit's wife among the Grecian isles

Advancing, forth she stretched her hand
And begged an alms with doleful plea
That ceased not; on our English land
Such woes, I knew, could never be;
And yet a boon I gave her, for the creature
Was beautiful to see,—a weed of glorious feature.

I left her, and pursued my way;
And soon before me did espy
A pair of little Boys at play,
Chasing a crimson butterfly;
The taller followed with his hat in hand,
Wreathed round with yellow flowers the gayest of the land.

The other wore a rimless crown,
With leaves of laurel stuck about;
And, while both followed up and down,
Each whooping with a merry shout,
In their fraternal features I could trace
Unquestionable lines of that wild Suppliant's face.

Yet *they*, so blithe of heart, seemed unfit
For finest tasks of earth or air:
Wings let them have, and they might flit
Precursors to Aurora's car,
Scattering fresh flowers; though happier far, I ween,
To hunt their fluttering game o'er rock and level green.

They dart across my path, — but lo,
Each ready with a plaintive whine!
Said I, "Not half an hour ago
Your Mother has had alms of mine."
"That cannot be," one answered, "she is dead":—
I looked reproof, — they saw, — but neither hung
his head.

"She has been dead, Sir, many a day." —
"Hush, boys! you 're telling me a lie;
It was your Mother, as I say!"
And, in the twinkling of an eye,
"Come! come!" cried one, and, without more ado
Off to some other play the joyous Vagrants flew!

1802

XIX.

SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING.

COMPOSED MANY YEARS AFTER.

WHERE are they now, those wanton Boys?
For whose free range the dædal earth
Was filled with animated toys,
And implements of frolic mirth;
With tools for ready wit to guide;
And ornaments of seemlier pride,

More fresh, more bright, than princes wear;
For what one moment flung aside,
Another could repair:
What good or evil have they seen
Since I their pastime witnessed here,
Their daring wiles, their sportive cheer?
I ask, — but all is dark between!

They met me in a genial hour,
When universal nature breathed
As with the breath of one sweet flower, —
A time to overrule the power
Of discontent, and check the birth
Of thoughts with better thoughts at strife,
The most familiar bane of life
Since parting Innocence bequeathed
Mortality to Earth!
Soft clouds, the whitest of the year,
Sailed through the sky; the brooks ran clear;
The lambs from rock to rock were bounding;
With songs the budded groves resounding;
And to my heart are still endeared
The thoughts with which it then was cheered;
The faith which saw that gladsome pair
Walk through the fire with unsinged hair.
Or, if such faith must needs deceive,
Then, Spirits of beauty and of grace,
Associates in that eager chase, —
Ye who within the blameless mind
Your favorite seat of empire find, —

Kind Spirits! may we not believe
That they, so happy and so fair
Through your sweet influence, and the care
Of pitying Heaven, at least were free
From touch of *deadly* injury?
Destined, whate'er their earthly doom,
For mercy and immortal bloom?

1817

XX.

GYPSIES.

Yet are they here, the same unbroken knot
Of human beings, in the selfsame spot!
Men, women, children, yea, the frame
Of the whole spectacle the same!
Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
Now deep and red, the coloring of night,
That on their Gypsy faces falls,
Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours are gone, while I
Have been a traveller under open sky,
Much witnessing of change and cheer,
Yet as I left I find them here!
The weary Sun betook himself to rest; —
Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,

Outshining like a visible God
The glorious path in which he trod.
And now, ascending, after one dark hour
And one night's diminution of her power,
Behold the mighty Moon! this way
She looks as if at them, — but they
Regard not her. — O better wrong and strife
(By nature transient) than this torpid life, —
Life which the very stars reprove,
As on their silent tasks they move!
Yet, witness all that stirs in heaven or earth!
In scorn I speak not; — they are what their birth
And breeding suffer them to be;
Wild outcasts of society!

1807.

XXI.

RUTH.

When Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live; her thoughts her own;
Herself her own delight;
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay;
And, passing thus the livelong day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a Youth from Georgia's shore,—
A military casque he wore,
With splendid feathers drest;
He brought them from the Cherokees;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
But no! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier's name;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek,
In finest tones the Youth could speak:
— While he was yet a boy,

The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely Youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he;
And when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a Youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls — a happy rout! —
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues;
With budding, fading, faded flowers,
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head!
The cypress and her spire; —
Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannas spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

"How pleasant," then he said, "it were,
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade
To wander with an easy mind;
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade!

"What days and what bright years! Ah me.
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So passed in quiet bliss,
And all the while," said he, "to know
That we are in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this!"

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father's love:
"For there," said he, "are spun

Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

"Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer!

"Beloved Ruth!" — No more he said.
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear:
She thought again, — and did agree,
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

"And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife."
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannas, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth, so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers;
The breezes their own languor lent;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favored bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:

For passions linked to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires:
A Man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the Maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn:
What could he less than love a Maid
Whose heart with so much nature played?
So kind and so forlorn!

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
"O Ruth! I have been worse than dead;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had crossed the Atlantic main.

"Before me shone a glorious world, —
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
To music suddenly:
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains,
To live at liberty.

"No more of this; for now, by thee,
Dear Ruth! more happily set free,
With nobler zeal I burn;
My soul from darkness is released,
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return."

Full soon that better mind was gone;
No hope, no wish remained, not one, —
They stirred him now no more;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore;
But when they thither came, the Youth
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth! — Such pains she had
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed;

And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May; —
They all were with her in her cell;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain;
She from her prison fled;
But of the Vagrant none took thought;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again:
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free;
And, coming to the Banks of Tone,
There did she rest, and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves, — she loved them still;
Nor ever taxed them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies;
But till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree,)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!
And Ruth will, long before her day,
Be broken down and old:
Sore aches she needs must have! but less
Of mind than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food,
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side;
And there she begs at one steep place
Where up and down, with easy pace,
The horseman-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away; but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers:
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild, —

Such small machinery as she turned
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy Child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mould
Thy corpse shall buried be,
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

1799.

XXII.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE.

I.

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

II.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;

The grass is bright with rain-drops; — on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

III.

I was a Traveller then upon the moor;
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

IV.

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low;
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness, and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could name.

V.

I heard the skylark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;

Far from the world I walk, and all from care;
But there may come another day to me, —
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty

VI.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can he expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

VII.

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of him who walked in glory and in joy,
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits we are deified:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

VIII.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven

I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore gray
hairs.

IX.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence
So that it seems a thing endued with sense; —
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself; —

X.

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast

XI.

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
Upon a long gray staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII.

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon that muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book:
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day"

XIII.

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew;
And him with further words I thus bespake:
"What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet vivid eyes.

XIV.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest, —
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

XV.

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor:

Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

XVI.

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

XVII.

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labor, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
— Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

XVIII.

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side;

But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

XIX.

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech, — all troubled me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

XX.

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanor kind,
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn, to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;
I 'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!"

1807.

XXIII.

THE THORN.

I.

"THERE is a Thorn, — it looks so old,
In truth, you'd find it hard to say
How it could ever have been young,
It looks so old and gray.
Not higher than a two years' child
It stands erect, this aged Thorn;
No leaves it has, no prickly points;
It is a mass of knotted joints,
A wretched thing forlorn.
It stands erect, and like a stone
With lichens is it overgrown.

II.

"Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown
With lichens to the very top,
And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
A melancholy crop:
Up from the earth these mosses creep,
And this poor Thorn they clasp it round
So close, you 'd say that they are bent
With plain and manifest intent
To drag it to the ground;
And all have joined in one endeavor
To bury this poor Thorn for ever.

III.

"High on a mountain's highest ridge,
Where oft the stormy winter gale
Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
It sweeps from vale to vale,
Not five yards from the mountain path,
This Thorn you on your left espy;
And to the left, three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water, — never dry,
Though but of compass small, and bare
To thirsty suns and parching air.

IV.

"And, close beside this aged Thorn,
There is a fresh and lovely sight,
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
Just half a foot in height.
All lovely colors there you see,
All colors that were ever seen;
And mossy network too is there,
As if by hand of lady fair
The work had woven been;
And cups, the darlings of the eye,
So deep is their vermilion dye.

V.

"Ah me! what lovely tints are there
Of olive-green and scarlet bright,
In spikes, in branches, and in stars,

Green, red, and pearly white!
This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss,
Which close beside the Thorn you see,
So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
Is like an infant's grave in size,
As like as like can be:
But never, never anywhere,
An infant's grave was half so fair.

VI.

"Now would you see this aged Thorn,
This pond, and beauteous hill of moss,
You must take care and choose your time
The mountain when to cross.
For oft there sits between the heap
So like an infant's grave in size,
And that same pond of which I spoke,
A Woman in a scarlet cloak,
And to herself she cries,
'O misery! O misery!
O woe is me! O misery!'

VII.

"At all times of the day and night
This wretched Woman thither goes;
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows;
And there, beside the Thorn, she sits
When the blue daylight 's in the skies,
And when the whirlwind 's on the hill,

Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,
'O misery! O misery!
O woe is me! O misery!'"

VIII.

"Now wherefore thus, by day and night,
In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
Thus to the dreary mountain-top
Does this poor Woman go?
And why sits she beside the Thorn
When the blue daylight 's in the sky,
Or when the whirlwind 's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And wherefore does she cry? —
O wherefore? wherefore? tell me why
Does she repeat that doleful cry?"

IX.

"I cannot tell; I wish I could;
For the true reason no one knows:
But would you gladly view the spot,
The spot to which she goes,
The hillock like an infant's grave,
The pond, and Thorn so old and gray,
Pass by her door, — 't is seldom shut, —
And if you see her in her hut,
Then to the spot away!
I never heard of such as dare
Approach the spot when she is there."

X.

"But wherefore to the mountain-top
Can this unhappy Woman go,
Whatever star is in the skies,
Whatever wind may blow?"
"Full twenty years are past and gone
Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
Gave with a maiden's true good-will
Her company to Stephen Hill;
And she was blithe and gay,
While friends and kindred all approved
Of him whom tenderly she loved.

XI.

"And they had fixed the wedding day,
The morning that must wed them both;
But Stephen to another Maid
Had sworn another oath;
And, with this other Maid, to church
Unthinking Stephen went. —
Poor Martha! on that woful day
A pang of pitiless dismay
Into her soul was sent;
A fire was kindled in her breast,
Which might not burn itself to rest.

XII.

"They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,

And there was often seen.
What could she seek? — or wish to hide?
Her state to any eye was plain;
She was with child, and she was mad:
Yet often was she sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
O guilty Father! — would that death
Had saved him from that breach of faith!

XIII.

"Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child!
Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild!
Last Christmas-eve we talked of this,
And gray-haired Wilfred of the glen
Held that the unborn infant wrought
About its mother's heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear

XIV.

"More know I not, I wish I did,
And it should all be told to you;
For what became of this poor child
No mortal ever knew;
Nay, if a child to her was born
No earthly tongue could ever tell;
And if 't was born alive or dead,

Far less could this with proof be said;
But some remember well,
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.

XV.

"And all that winter, when at night
The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
'T was worth your while, though in the dark
The churchyard path to seek:
For many a time and oft were heard
Cries coming from the mountain head:
Some plainly living voices were;
And others, I 've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead:
I cannot think, whate'er they say,
They had to do with Martha Ray.

XVI.

"But that she goes to this old Thorn,
The Thorn which I described to you,
And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
I will be sworn is true.
For one day with my telescope,
To view the ocean wide and bright,
When to this country first I came,
Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
I climbed the mountain's height: —
A storm came on, and I could see
No object higher than my knee.

XVII.

"'T was mist and rain, and storm and rain:
No screen, no fence, could I discover;
And then the wind! in sooth, it was
A wind full ten times over.
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag, — and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain;
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A Woman seated on the ground.

XVIII.

"I did not speak, — I saw her face;
Her face! — it was enough for me;
I turned about and heard her cry,
'O misery! O misery!'
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear blue sky will go;
And when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shudders, and you hear her cry,
'O misery! O misery!'"

XIX.

"But what 's the Thorn? and what the pond?
And what the hill of moss to her?
And what the creeping breeze that comes
The little pond to stir?"
"I cannot tell; but some will say

She hanged her baby on the tree;
Some say she drowned it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond:
But all and each agree,
The little Babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XX.

"I've heard, the moss is spotted red
With drops of that poor infant's blood;
But kill a new-born infant thus,
I do not think she could!
Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby's face,
And that it looks at you;
Whene'er you look on it, 't is plain
The baby looks at you again.

XXI.

"And some had sworn an oath, that she
Should be to public justice brought;
And for the little infant's bones
With spades they would have sought.
But instantly the hill of moss
Before their eyes began to stir!
And, for full fifty yards around,
The grass, it shook upon the ground!
Yet all do still aver
The little Babe lies buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXII.

"I cannot tell how this may be,
But plain it is the Thorn is bound
With heavy tufts of moss, that strive
To drag it to the ground;
And this I know, full many a time,
When she was on a mountain high,
By day, and in the silent night,
When all the stars shone clear and bright,
That I have heard her cry,
'O misery! O misery!
O woe is me! O misery!'"

1798.

XXIV.

HART-LEAP WELL.

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable Chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the Second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

THE Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud;
And now, as he approached a vassal's door,
"Bring forth another horse!" he cried aloud.

"Another horse!"—That shout the vassal heard
And saddled his best steed, a comely gray;
Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar;
But horse and man are vanished, one and all;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain:
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The Knight hallooed, he cheered and chid them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern;
But breath and eyesight fail; and, one by one,
The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown?
—This chase it looks not like an earthly chase;
Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain-side;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died;
But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a thorn;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy:
He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned,
And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretched:
His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Never had living man such joyful lot!)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill, (it was at least
Four roods of sheer ascent,) Sir Walter found
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted Beast
Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by human eyes:
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

"I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbor, made for rural joy;
'T will be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

"A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for that fountain in the dell!
And they who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth, shall call it HART-LEAP WELL.

"And, gallant Stag! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

"And, in the summer-time when days are long,
I will come hither with my Paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

"Till the foundations of the mountains fail,
My mansion with its arbor shall endure; —
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure!

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring.
— Soon did the Knight perform what he had said,
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the Moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined, —
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter led his wondering Paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale. —
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND.

The moving accident is not my trade;
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:

'T is my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square;
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine:
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line, —
The last stone pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were gray, with neither arms nor head
Half wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
"Here in old time the hand of man hath been."

I looked upon the hill both far and near, —
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,
Came up the hollow: — him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquired.

The Shepherd stopped, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.

"A jolly place," said he, "in times of old!
But something ails it now: the spot is curst.

"You see these lifeless stumps of aspen-wood, —
Some say that they are beeches, others elms, —
These were the bower; and here a mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms!

"The arbor does its own condition tell;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream;
But as to the great Lodge! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

"There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

"Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood: but, for my part,
I've guessed, when I've been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

"What thoughts must through the creature's brain have past!
Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds, — and look, Sir, at this last.
O Master! it has been a cruel leap.

For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell

What cause the Hart might have to love this place
And come and make his death-bed near the well

"Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by the fountain in the summer tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother's side.

"In April here beneath the flowering thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that selfsame spring.

"Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone."

"Gray-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine
This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

"The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

"The pleasure-house is dust: — behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;

But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

"She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

"One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

1800.

XXV.

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE,

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND HONORS OF HIS ANCESTORS.

High in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the Song.—
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long:—

"From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;

She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming:
Both roses flourish, red and white:
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended. —
Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how she smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!

"They came with banner, spear, and shield
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood, —
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful North:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.

"How glad is Skipton at this hour, —
Though lonely, a deserted Tower;

Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom:
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon, — though the sleep
Of years be on her! — She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower: —
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer,
To see her Master and to cheer —
Him, and his Lady-mother dear!

"O, it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born! —
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.
Who will take them from the light?
— Yonder is a man in sight, —
Yonder is a house, — but where?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;

She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child!

"Now who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a Shepherd-boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be he who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread!
God loves the Child; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her Babe did say:
'My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best!'

"Alas! when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.

— Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distrest;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

"A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
— Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty;
And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;

The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant;
He hath kenned them taking wing:
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
—Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Armor rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;—
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance,—
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield,—
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our Shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored

Like a reappearing Star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was framed:
How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts, were dead:
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage-hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honored more and more;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore

1807.

XXVI.

LINES,

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON RE-VISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR.

JULY 13, 1798.

FIVE years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.* — Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild, secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion, and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem

* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:— feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:— that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul
While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft —
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart —
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days

And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. — I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm
By thoughts supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,

And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, — both what they half create,*
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. O yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 't is her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all

* This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's, the exact expression of which I do not recollect.

The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; O, then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance, —
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence, — wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love, — oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake.

1798.

XXVII.

It is no Spirit who from heaven hath flown,
And is descending on his embassy;
Nor Traveller gone from earth the heavens to
espy!
'T is Hesperus, — there he stands with glittering
crown,
First admonition that the sun is down!
For yet it is broad daylight: clouds pass by;
A few are near him still; — and now the sky,
He hath it to himself, — 't is all his own.
O most ambitious Star! an inquest wrought
Within me when I recognized thy light;
A moment I was startled at the sight:
And while I gazed, there came to me a thought
That I might step beyond my natural race,
As thou seem'st now to do; might one day trace
Some ground not mine; and, strong her strength
above,
My Soul, an Apparition in the place,
Tread there with steps that no one shall reprove!

1802.

XXVIII.

FRENCH REVOLUTION,

AS IT APPEARED TO ENTHUSIASTS AT ITS COMMENCEMENT.*

REPRINTED FROM "THE FRIEND."

O PLEASANT exercise of hope and joy!
For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood
Upon our side, we who were strong in love!
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven! — O times
In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways
Of custom, law, and statute took at once
The attraction of a country in romance!
When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights,
When most intent on making of herself
A prime Enchantress — to assist the work,
Which then was going forward in her name!
Not favored spots alone, but the whole earth,
The beauty wore of promise, that which sets
(As at some moment might not be unfelt
Among the bowers of paradise itself)
The budding rose above the rose full-blown.
What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt away!

* This and the Extract, Vol. I. p. 219, and the first piece of this Class, are from the unpublished Poem of which some account is given in the Preface to the EXCURSION.

They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
The playfellows of fancy, — who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and strength
Their ministers, — who in lordly wise had stirred
Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found there
As if they had within some lurking right
To wield it; — they, too, who, of gentle mood,
Had watched all gentle motions, and to these
Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild,
And in the region of their peaceful selves; —
Now was it that both found, the meek and lofty
Did both find, helpers to their heart's desire,
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish;
Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia, subterranean fields,
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us, — the place where in the end
We find our happiness, or not at all!

1805.

XXIX.

Yes, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound!

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like — but oh! how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, or strife, —
Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too? — yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognized intelligence!

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar; —
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God, — of God they are.

1806.

XXX.

TO A SKYLARK.

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye

Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest, which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood:
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home

1825.

XXXI.

LAODAMIA.

"With sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required:
Celestial pity I again implore; —
Restore him to my sight, — great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens and her eye expands;

Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived? — O joy!
What doth she look on? — whom doth she behold?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence? his corporeal mould?
It is, — if sense deceive her not, — 't is He!
And a God leads him, winged Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake, — and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear: "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamía! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts, — but parts to reunite,
And reassume his place before her sight.

"Protesiláus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace, — yonder is thy throne;

Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appall me have the Gods bestowed
This precious boon, and blest a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamía! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect: — Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief, by Hector slain."

"Supreme of Heroes! bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st — and I forgive thee — here thou art —
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he whose power restores thee hath decreed
Thou shouldst elude the malice of the grave:

Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

"No Spectre greets me, — no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly — Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide — majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn —"

"Ah, wherefore? — Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"'The Gods to us are merciful, and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favorite seat be feeble woman's breast.

"But if thou goest, I follow —" "Peace!" he said; —
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered
The ghastly color from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive, though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away, — no strife to heal, —
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous, imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue. — "Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night;

"And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports, — or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

"The wished-for wind was given: — I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand, —
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, ofttimes bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life, —
The paths which we had trod, — these fountains, flowers, —
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

" But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
Behold they tremble! — haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?'
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred: — but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

" And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest reunion in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathized
Be thy affections raised and solemnized.

" Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend, —
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven, —
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes reappears!
Round the dear Shade she would have clung, — 'tis vain:
The hours are past, — too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse she lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,
By the just Gods, whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes. — Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight;
A constant interchange of growth and blight! *

1814.

* For the account of these long-lived trees, see Pliny's Natural History, Lib. XVI. Cap. 44; and for the features in the character of Protesilaus see the Iphigenia in Aulis of Euripides. Virgil places the Shade of Laodamia in a mournful region, among unhappy Lovers:

——— His Laodamia
It Comes. ———

XXXII.

DION.

(SEE PLUTARCH.)

I.

Serene, and fitted to embrace,
Where'er he turned, a swan-like grace
Of haughtiness without pretence,
And to unfold a still magnificence,
Was princely Dion, in the power
And beauty of his happier hour.
And what pure homage *then* did wait
On Dion's virtues, while the lunar beam
Of Plato's genius, from its lofty sphere,
Fell round him in the grove of Academe,
Softening their inbred dignity austere, —
That he, not too elate
With self-sufficing solitude,
But with majestic lowliness endued,
Might in the universal bosom reign,
And from affectionate observance gain
Help, under every change of adverse fate.

II.

Five thousand warriors, — O the rapturous day! —
Each crowned with flowers, and armed with spear
and shield.
Or ruder weapon which their course might yield,
To Syracuse advance in bright array.

Who leads them on? — The anxious people see
Long-exiled Dion marching at their head,
He also crowned with flowers of Sicily,
And in a white, far-beaming corselet clad!
Pure transport undisturbed by doubt or fear
The gazers feel; and, rushing to the plain,
Salute those strangers as a holy train
Or blest procession (to the Immortals dear)
That brought their precious liberty again.
Lo! when the gates are entered, on each hand,
Down the long street, rich goblets filled with wine
In seemly order stand,
On tables set, as if for rites divine; —
And, as the great Deliverer marches by,
He looks on festal ground with fruits bestrown;
And flowers are on his person thrown
In boundless prodigality;
Nor doth the general voice abstain from prayer,
Invoking Dion's tutelary care,
As if a very Deity he were?

III.

Mourn, hills and groves of Attica! and mourn,
Ilissus, bending o'er thy classic urn!
Mourn, and lament for him whose spirit dreads
Your once sweet memory, studious walks and shades!
For him who to divinity aspired,
Not on the breath of popular applause,
But through dependence on the sacred laws

Framed in the schools where Wisdom dwelt retired,
Intent to trace the ideal path of right
(More fair than heaven's broad causeway paved with stars)
Which Dion learned to measure with sublime delight; —
But he hath overleaped the eternal bars;
And, following guides whose craft holds no consent
With aught that breathes the ethereal element,
Hath stained the robes of civil power with blood,
Unjustly shed, though for the public good.
Whence doubts that came too late, and wishes vain,
Hollow excuses, and triumphant pain;
And oft his cogitations sink as low
As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
The heaviest plummet of despair can go.
But whence that sudden check? that fearful start!
He hears an uncouth sound, —
Anon his lifted eyes
Saw, at a long-drawn gallery's dusky bound,
A Shape of more than mortal size
And hideous aspect, stalking round and round!
A woman's garb the Phantom wore,
And fiercely swept the marble floor, —
Like Auster whirling to and fro,
His force on Caspian foam to try;
Or Boreas when he scours the snow
That skims the plains of Thessaly,
Or when aloft on Mænalus he stops
His flight, 'mid eddying pine-tree tops!

IV.

So, but from toil less sign of profit reaping,
The sullen Spectre to her purpose bowed,
Sweeping, — vehemently sweeping, —
No pause admitted, no design avowed!
"Avaunt, inexplicable Guest! — avaunt!"
Exclaimed the Chieftain; — "let me rather see
The coronal that coiling vipers make;
The torch that flames with many a lurid flake,
And the long train of doleful pageantry
Which they behold whom vengeful Furies haunt;
Who, while they struggle from the scourge to flee,
Move where the blasted soil is not unworn,
And, in their anguish, bear what other minds have borne!"

V.

But Shapes that come not at an earthly call
Will not depart when mortal voices bid;
Lords of the visionary eye, whose lid,
Once raised, remains aghast, and will not fall!
Ye Gods, thought he, that servile implement
Obeys a mystical intent!
Your Minister would brush away
The spots that to my soul adhere;
But should she labor night and day,
They will not, cannot disappear;
Whence angry perturbations, — and that look
Which no philosophy can brook!

VI.

Ill-fated Chief! there are whose hopes are built
Upon the ruins of thy glorious name;
Who, through the portal of one moment's guilt,
Pursue thee with their deadly aim!
O matchless perfidy! portentous lust
Of monstrous crime! — that horror-striking blade,
Drawn in defiance of the Gods, hath laid
The noble Syracusan low in dust!
Shuddered the walls, — the marble city wept, —
And sylvan places heaved a pensive sigh;
But in calm peace the appointed Victim slept,
As he had fallen in magnanimity;
Of spirit too capacious to require
That Destiny her course should change; too just
To his own native greatness to desire
That wretched boon, days lengthened by mistrust.
So were the hopeless troubles, that involved
The soul of Dion, instantly dissolved.
Released from life and cares of princely state,
He left this moral grafted on his Fate:
"Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends,
Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends."

1816

XXXIII.

THE PASS OF KIRKSTONE.

I.

Within the mind strong fancies work,
A deep delight the bosom thrills,
Oft as I pass along the fork
Of these fraternal hills:
Where, save the rugged road, we find
No appanage of human kind,
Nor hint of man; if stone or rock
Seem not his handiwork to mock
By something cognizably shaped;
Mockery, — or model roughly hewn,
And left as if by earthquake strewn,
Or from the flood escaped:
Altars for Druid service fit
(But where no fire was ever lit,
Unless the glowworm to the skies
Thence offer nightly sacrifice);
Wrinkled Egyptian monument;
Green, moss-grown tower; or hoary tent;
Tents of a camp that never shall be raised, —
On which four thousand years have gazed!

II.

Ye ploughshares sparkling on the slopes!
Ye snow-white lambs that trip

Imprisoned 'mid the formal props
Of restless ownership?
Ye trees, that may to-morrow fall
To feed the insatiate Prodigal!
Lawns, houses, chattels, groves, and fields,
All that the fertile valley shields;
Wages of folly, baits of crime,
Of life's uneasy game the stake,
Playthings that keep the eyes awake
Of drowsy, dotard Time; —
O care! O guilt! — O vales and plains,
Here, 'mid his own unvexed domains,
A Genius dwells, that can subdue
At once all memory of You, —
Most potent when mists veil the sky,
Mists that distort and magnify;
While the coarse rushes, to the sweeping breeze,
Sigh forth their ancient melodies!

III.

List to those shriller notes! — *that* march
Perchance was on the blast,
When, through this Height's inverted arch,
Rome's earliest legion passed!
— They saw, adventurously impelled,
And older eyes than theirs beheld,
This block, — and yon, whose church-like frame
Gives to this savage Pass its name.
Aspiring Road! that lov'st to hide
Thy daring in a vapory bourn,

Not seldom may the hour return
When thou shalt be my guide:
And I (as all men may find cause,
When life is at a weary pause,
And they have panted up the hill
Of duty with reluctant will)
Be thankful, even though tired and faint,
For the rich bounties of constraint;
Whence oft invigorating transports flow
That choice lacked courage to bestow!

IV.

My Soul was grateful for delight
That wore a threatening brow;
A veil is lifted,—can she slight
The scene that opens now?
Though habitation none appear,
The greenness tells, man must be there;
The shelter—that the pérspective
Is of the clime in which we live;
Where Toil pursues his daily round;
Where Pity sheds sweet tears; and Love,
In woodbine bower or birchen grove,
Inflicts his tender wound.
—Who comes not hither ne'er shall know
How beautiful the world below;
Nor can he guess how lightly leaps
The brook adown the rocky steeps.
Farewell, thou desolate Domain!
Hope, pointing to the cultured plain,

Carols like a shepherd-boy;
And who is she? — Can that be Joy!
Who, with a sunbeam for her guide,
Smoothly skims the meadows wide;
While Faith, from yonder opening cloud,
To hill and vale proclaims aloud,
"Whate'er the weak may dread, the wicked dare,
Thy lot, O Man, is good, thy portion fair!"

1817.

XXXIV.

TO ENTERPRISE.

KEEP for the Young the impassioned smile
Shed from thy countenance, as I see thee stand
High on that chalky cliff of Briton's Isle,
A slender volume grasping in thy hand
(Perchance the pages that relate
The various turns of Crusoe's fate), —
Ah, spare the exulting smile,
And drop thy pointing finger, bright
As the first flash of beacon light;
But neither veil thy head in shadows dim,
Nor turn thy face away
From one who, in the evening of his day,
To thee would offer no presumptuous hymn!

I.

Bold Spirit! who art free to rove
Among the starry courts of Jove,
And oft in splendor dost appear
Embodied to poetic eyes,
While traversing this nether sphere,
Where Mortals call thee ENTERPRISE.
Daughter of Hope! her favorite Child,
Whom she to young Ambition bore,
When hunter's arrow first defiled
The grove, and stained the turf with gore;
Thee wingèd Fancy took, and nursed
On broad Euphrates' palmy shore,
And where the mightier Waters burst
From caves of Indian mountains hoar!
She wrapped thee in a panther's skin;
And thou, thy favorite food to win,
The flame-eyed eagle oft wouldst scare
From her rock-fortress in mid-air,
With infant shout; and often sweep,
Paired with the ostrich, o'er the plain;
Or, tired with sport, wouldst sink asleep
Upon the couchant lion's mane!
With rolling years thy strength increased;
And, far beyond thy native East,
To thee, by varying titles known
As variously thy power was shown,
Did incense-bearing altars rise,
Which caught the blaze of sacrifice,
From suppliants panting for the skies!

II.

What though this ancient Earth be trod
No more by step of Demigod
Mounting from glorious deed to deed
As thou from clime to clime didst lead;
Yet still, the bosom beating high,
And the hushed farewell of an eye
Where no procrastinating gaze
A last infirmity betrays,
Prove that thy heaven-descended sway
Shall ne'er submit to cold decay.
By thy divinity impelled,
The Stripling seeks the tented field;
The aspiring Virgin kneels, and, pale
With awe, receives the hallowed veil,
A soft and tender Heroine
Vowed to severer discipline;
Inflamed by thee, the blooming Boy
Makes of the whistling shrouds a toy,
And of the ocean's dismal breast
A play-ground, — or a couch of rest;
'Mid the blank world of snow and ice,
Thou to his dangers dost enchain
The Chamois-chaser, awed in vain
By chasm or dizzy precipice;
And hast thou not with triumph seen
How soaring Mortals glide between
Or through the clouds, and brave the light
With bolder than Icarian flight?
How they, in bells of crystal, dive,

Where winds and waters cease to strive.
For no unholy visitings,
Among the monsters of the Deep,
And all the sad and precious things
Which there in ghastly silence sleep?
Or, adverse tides and currents headed,
And breathless calms no longer dreaded,
In never-slackening voyage go
Straight as an arrow from the bow,
And, slighting sails and scorning oars,
Keep faith with Time on distant shores?
— Within our fearless reach are placed
The secrets of the burning Waste;
Egyptian tombs unlock their dead,
Nile trembles at his fountain-head;
Thou speak'st, — and lo! the Polar Seas
Unbosom their last mysteries.
— But oh! what transports, what sublime reward,
Won from the world of mind, dost thou prepare
For philosophic Sage; or high-souled Bard,
Who, for thy service trained in lonely woods,
Hath fed on pageants floating through the air,
Or calentured in depth of limpid floods;
Nor grieves, tho' doomed thro' silent night to bear
The domination of his glorious themes,
Or struggle in the network of thy dreams!

III.

If there be movements in the Patriot's soul,
From source still deeper, and of higher worth,

'T is thine the quickening impulse to control,
And in due season send the mandate forth;
Thy call a prostrate Nation can restore,
When but a single Mind resolves to crouch no more.

IV.

Dread Minister of wrath!
Who to their destined punishment dost urge
The Pharaohs of the earth, the men of hardened heart!
Not unassisted by the flattering stars,
Thou strew'st temptation o'er the path
When they in pomp depart,
With trampling horses and refulgent cars,—
Soon to be swallowed by the briny surge;
Or cast, for lingering death, on unknown strands;
Or caught amid a whirl of desert sands,—
An army now, and now a living hill
That a brief while heaves with convulsive throes,—
Then all is still;
Or, to forget their madness and their woes,
Wrapt in a winding-sheet of spotless snows!

V.

Back flows the willing current of my Song:
If to provoke such doom the Impious dare,
Why should it daunt a blameless prayer?
— Bold Goddess! range our Youth among;
Nor let thy genuine impulse fail to beat

In hearts no longer young;
Still may a veteran Few have pride
In thoughts whose sternness makes them sweet;
In fixed resolves by Reason justified;
That to their object cleave like sleet
Whitening a pine-tree's northern side,
When fields are naked far and wide,
And withered leaves, from earth's cold breast
Up-caught in whirlwinds, nowhere can find rest.

VI.

But, if such homage thou disdain
As doth with mellowing years agree,
One rarely absent from thy train
More humble favors may obtain
For thy contented Votary.
She, who incites the frolic lambs
In presence of their heedless dams,
And to the solitary fawn
Vouchsafes her lessons, bounteous Nymph
That wakes the breeze, the sparkling lymph
Doth hurry to the lawn;
She, who inspires that strain of joyance holy
Which the sweet Bird, misnamed the melancholy,
Pours forth in shady groves, shall plead for me;
And vernal mornings opening bright
With views of undefined delight,
And cheerful songs, and suns that shine
On busy days, with thankful nights, be mine.

VII.

But thou, O Goddess! in thy favorite Isle
(Freedom's impregnable redoubt,
The wide earth's storehouse fenced about
With breakers roaring to the gales
That stretch a thousand thousand sails)
Quicken the slothful, and exalt the vile!—
Thy impulse is the life of Fame;
Glad Hope would almost cease to be
If torn from thy society;
And Love, when worthiest of his name,
Is proud to walk the earth with thee!

XXXV.

TO ——,

ON HER FIRST ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF HELVELLYN.

Inmate of a mountain dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn;
Awed, delighted, and amazed!

Potent was the spell that bound thee,
Not unwilling to obey;
For blue Ether's arms, flung round thee,
Stilled the pantings of dismay.

Lo the dwindled woods and meadows!
What a vast abyss is there!
Lo the clouds, the solemn shadows,
And the glistenings, — heavenly fair!

And a record of commotion
Which a thousand ridges yield;
Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean
Gleaming like a silver shield!

Maiden! now take flight; — inherit
Alps or Andes, — they are thine!
With the morning's roseate Spirit,
Sweep their length of snowy line;

Or survey their bright dominions
In the gorgeous colors drest
Flung from off the purple pinions
Evening spreads throughout the west!

Thine are all the coral fountains
Warbling in each sparry vault
Of the untrodden lunar mountains;
Listen to their songs! — or halt,

To Niphates' top invited,
Whither spiteful Satan steered;
Or descend where the ark alighted,
When the green earth reappeared; —

For the power of hills is on thee,
As was witnessed through thine eye
Then, when old Helvellyn won thee
To confess their majesty!

1816.

XXXVI.

TO A YOUNG LADY,

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY.

Dear Child of Nature, let them rail!
— There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbor and a hold;
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see
Thy own heart-stirring days, and be
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd-boy,
And treading among flowers of joy
Which at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when gray hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave;

But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

1803.

XXXVII.

WATER-FOWL.

Let me be allowed the aid of verse to describe the evolutions which these visitants sometimes perform, on a fine day towards the close of winter." — *Extract from the Author's Book on the Lakes.*

Mark how the feathered tenants of the flood,
With grace of motion that might scarcely seem
Inferior to angelic, prolong
Their curious pastime! shaping in mid-air
(And sometimes with ambitious wing that soars
High as the level of the mountain-tops)
A circuit ampler than the lake beneath, —
Their own domain; but ever, while intent
On tracing and retracing that large round,
Their jubilant activity evolves
Hundreds of curves and circlets, to and fro,
Upward and downward, progress intricate
Yet unperplexed, as if one spirit swayed
Their indefatigable flight. 'T is done, —
Ten times, or more, I fancied it had ceased
But lo the vanished company again

Ascending! they approach, — I hear their wings,
Faint, faint at first; and then an eager sound,
Past in a moment, — and as faint again!
They tempt the sun to sport amid their plumes;
They tempt the water, or the gleaming ice,
To show them a fair image; 't is themselves,
Their own fair forms, upon the glimmering plain,
Painted more soft and fair as they descend
Almost to touch; — then up again aloft,
Up with a sally and a flash of speed,
As if they scorned both resting-place and rest!

1812.

XXXVIII.

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF BLACK COMB.

This Height a ministering Angel might select:
For from the summit of Black Comb (dread name
Derived from clouds and storms!) the amplest range
Of unobstructed prospect may be seen
That British ground commands: — low dusky tracts,
Where Trent is nursed, far southward! Cambrian hills
To the southwest, a multitudinous show;
And, in a line of eyesight linked with these,
The hoary peaks of Scotland that give birth
To Tiviot's stream, to Annan, Tweed, and Clyde: —

Crowding the quarter whence the sun comes forth,
Gigantic mountains rough with crags; beneath,
Right at the imperial station's western base,
Main ocean, breaking audibly, and stretched
Far into silent regions blue and pale; —
And visibly engirding Mona's Isle,
That, as we left the plain, before our sight
Stood like a lofty mount, uplifting slowly
(Above the convex of the watery globe)
Into clear view the cultured fields that streak
Her habitable shores, but now appears
A dwindled object, and submits to lie
At the spectator's feet. — Yon azure ridge,
Is it a perishable cloud? Or there
Do we behold the line of Erin's coast?
Land sometimes by the roving shepherd-swain
(Like the bright confines of another world)
Not doubtfully perceived. — Look homeward now!
In depth, in height, in circuit, how serene
The spectacle, how pure! — Of Nature's works,
In earth, and air, and earth-embracing sea,
A revelation infinite it seems;
Display august of man's inheritance,
Of Britain's calm felicity and power!

1818.

Black Comb stands at the southern extremity of Cumberland: its base covers a much greater extent of ground than any other mountain in those parts; and, from its situation, the summit commands a more extensive view than any other point in Britain.

XXXIX.

THE HAUNTED TREE.

TO ——.

THOSE silver clouds collected round the sun
His midday warmth abate not, seeming less
To overshade than multiply his beams
By soft reflection, — grateful to the sky,
To rocks, fields, woods. Nor doth our human sense
Ask, for its pleasure, screen or canopy
More ample than the time-dismantled oak
Spreads o'er this tuft of heath, which now, attired
In the whole fulness of its bloom, affords
Couch beautiful as e'er for earthly use
Was fashioned; whether by the hand of Art,
That Eastern Sultan, amid flowers enwrought
On silken tissue, might diffuse his limbs
In languor; or by Nature, for repose
Of panting Wood-nymph, wearied with the chase.
O Lady! fairer in thy Poet's sight
Than fairest spiritual creature of the groves,
Approach; — and, thus invited, crown with rest
The noontide hour: though truly some there are
Whose footsteps superstitiously avoid
This venerable Tree; for, when the wind
Blows keenly, it sends forth a creaking sound
(Above the general roar of woods and crags)
Distinctly heard from far, — a doleful note!
As if (so Grecian shepherds would have deemed

The Hamadryad, pent within, bewailed
Some bitter wrong. Nor is it unbelieved,
By ruder fancy, that a troubled ghost
Haunts the old trunk; lamenting deeds of which
The flowery ground is conscious. But no wind
Sweeps now along this elevated ridge;
Not even a zephyr stirs; — the obnoxious Tree
Is mute; and, in his silence, would look down,
O lovely Wanderer of the trackless hills,
On thy reclining form, with more delight
Than his coevals in the sheltered vale
Seem to participate, the while they view
Their own far-stretching arms and leafy heads
Vividly pictured in some glassy pool,
That, for a brief space, checks the hurrying stream!

1819.

XL.

THE TRIAD.

SHOW me the noblest Youth of present time,
Whose trembling fancy would to love give birth;
Some God or Hero, from the Olympian clime
Returned, to seek a Consort upon earth;
Or, in no doubtful prospect, let me see
The brightest star of ages yet to be,
And I will mate and match him blissfully.

I will not fetch a Naiad from a flood
Pure as herself, (song lacks not mightier power,)
Nor leaf-crowned Dryad from a pathless wood,
Nor Sea-nymph glistening from her choral bower
Mere Mortals bodied forth in vision still
Shall with Mount Ida's triple lustre fill
The chaster coverts of a British hill.

"Appear! — obey my lyre's command!
Come, like the Graces, hand in hand!
For ye, though not by birth allied,
Are Sisters in the bond of love;
Nor shall the tongue of envious pride
Presume those interweavings to reprove
In you, which that fair progeny of Jove
Learned from the tuneful spheres that glide
In endless union, earth and sea above."
— I sing in vain; — the pines have hushed their waving:
A peerless Youth expectant at my side,
Breathless as they, with unabated craving
Looks to the earth, and to the vacant air;
And, with a wandering eye that seems to chide,
Asks of the clouds what occupants they hide:
But why solicit more than sight could bear,
By casting on a moment all we dare?
Invoke we those bright Beings one by one;
And what was boldly promised, truly shall be done.

"Fear not a constraining measure!
— Yielding to this gentle spell,
Lucida! from domes of pleasure,
Or from cottage-sprinkled dell,
Come to regions solitary,
Where the eagle builds her aery,
Above the hermit's long-forsaken cell!"
— She comes! — behold
That Figure, like a ship with snow-white sail!
Nearer she draws; a breeze uplifts her veil;
Upon her coming wait
As pure a sunshine and as soft a gale
As e'er, on herbage covering earthly mould,
Tempted the bird of Juno to unfold
His richest splendor, — when his veering gait
And every motion of his starry train
Seem governed by a strain
Of music, audible to him alone.

"O Lady, worthy of earth's proudest throne!
Nor less, by excellence of nature, fit
Beside an unambitious hearth to sit
Domestic queen, where grandeur is unknown;
What living man could fear
The worst of Fortune's malice, wert thou near,
Humbling that lily-stem, thy sceptre meek,
That its fair flowers may from his cheek
Brush the too happy tear?
— Queen, and handmaid lowly.
Whose skill can speed the day with lively cares,

And banish melancholy
By all that mind invents or hand prepares;
O Thou, against whose lip, without its smile
And in its silence even, no heart is proof;
Whose goodness, sinking deep, would reconcile
The softest Nursling of a gorgeous palace
To the bare life beneath the hawthorn-roof
Of Sherwood's Archer, or in caves of Wallace —
Who that hath seen thy beauty could content
His soul with but a *glimpse* of heavenly day?
Who that hath loved thee, but would lay
His strong hand on the wind, if it were bent
To take thee in thy majesty away?
— Pass onward; (even the glancing deer
Till we depart intrude not here;)
That mossy slope, o'er which the woodbine throws
A canopy, is smoothed for thy repose!"

Glad moment is it when the throng
Of warblers in full concert strong
Strive, and not vainly strive, to rout
The lagging shower, and force coy Phœbus out,
Met by the rainbow's form divine,
Issuing from her cloudy shrine; —
So may the thrillings of the lyre
Prevail to further our desire,
While to these shades a sister Nymph I call.

"Come, if the notes thine ear may pierce,
Come, youngest of the lovely Three,

Submissive to the might of verse
And the dear voice of harmony,
By none more deeply felt than thee!"
— I sang; and lo! from pastimes virginal
She hastens to the tents
Of nature, and the lonely elements.
Air sparkles round her with a dazzling sheen;
But mark her glowing cheek, her vesture green
And, as if wishful to disarm
Or to repay the potent Charm,
She bears the stringèd lute of old romance,
That cheered the trellised arbor's privacy,
And soothed war-wearied knights in raftered hall.
How vivid, yet how delicate, her glee!
So tripped the Muse, inventress of the dance;
So, truant in waste woods, the blithe Euphrosyne!

But the ringlets of that head,
Why are they ungarlanded?
Why bedeck her temples less
Than the simplest shepherdess?
Is it not a brow inviting
Choicest flowers that ever breathed,
Which the myrtle would delight in
With Idalian rose enwreathed?
But her humility is well content
With *one* wild floweret, (call it not forlorn,)
FLOWER OF THE WINDS, beneath her bosom worn, —
Yet more for love than ornament.

Open, ye thickets! let her fly,
Swift as a Thracian Nymph, o'er field and height
For she, to all but those who love her shy,
Would gladly vanish from a Stranger's sight;
Though where she is beloved and loves,
Light as the wheeling butterfly she moves;
Her happy spirit as a bird is free,
That rifles blossoms on a tree,
Turning them inside out with arch audacity.
Alas! how little can a moment show
Of an eye where feeling plays
In ten thousand dewy rays;
A face o'er which a thousand shadows go!
— She stops, — is fastened to that rivulet's side
And there (while, with sedater mien,
O'er timid waters that have scarcely left
Their birthplace in the rocky cleft
She bends) at leisure may be seen
Features to old ideal grace allied,
Amid their smiles and dimples dignified, —
Fit countenance for the soul of primal truth;
The bland composure of eternal youth!

What more changeful than the sea?
But over his great tides
Fidelity presides;
And this light-hearted Maiden constant is as he.
High is her aim as heaven above,
And wide as ether her good-will;
And, like the lowly reed, her love

Can drink its nurture from the scantiest rill:
Insight as keen as frosty star
Is to *her* charity no bar,
Nor interrupts her frolic graces
When she is, far from these wild places,
Encircled by familiar faces.

O the charm that manners draw,
Nature, from thy genuine law!
If from what her hand would do,
Her voice would utter, aught ensue
Untoward or unfit;
She, in benign affections pure,
In self-forgetfulness secure,
Sheds round the transient harm or vague mischance
A light unknown to tutored elegance:
Hers is not a cheek shame-stricken,
But her blushes are joy-flushes;
And the fault (if fault it be)
Only ministers to quicken
Laughter-loving gayety,
And kindle sportive wit,—
Leaving this Daughter of the mountains free
As if she knew that Oberon king of Faery
Had crossed her purpose with some quaint vagary,
And heard his viewless bands
Over their mirthful triumph clapping hands.

"Last of the Three, though eldest born,
Reveal thyself, like pensive Morn

Touched by the skylark's earliest note,
Ere humbler gladness be afloat.
But whether in the semblance drest
Of Dawn, or Eve, fair vision of the west,
Come with each anxious hope subdued
By woman's gentle fortitude,
Each grief, through meekness, settling into rest.
— Or I would hail thee when some high-wrought
page
Of a closed volume lingering in thy hand
Has raised thy spirit to a peaceful stand
Among the glories of a happier age."

Her brow hath opened on me, — see it there,
Brightening the umbrage of her hair!
So gleams the crescent moon, that loves
To be descried through shady groves.
Tenderest bloom is on her cheek;
Wish not for a richer streak;
Nor dread the depth of meditative eye;
But let thy love, upon that azure field
Of thoughtfulness and beauty, yield
Its homage offered up in purity.
What wouldst thou more? In sunny glade,
Or under leaves of thickest shade,
Was such a stillness e'er diffused
Since earth grew calm while angels mused?
Softly she treads, as if her foot were loth
To crush the mountain dew-drops, — soon to melt
On the flower's breast; as if she felt

That flowers themselves, whate'er their hue,
With all their fragrance, all their glistening,
Call to the heart for inward listening, —
And though for bridal wreaths and tokens true
Welcomed wisely; though a growth
Which the careless shepherd sleeps on,
As fitly spring from turf the mourner weeps on, —
And without wrong are cropped the marble tomb
to strew.
The Charm is over; the mute Phantoms gone,
Nor will return; — but droop not, favored Youth;
The apparition that before thee shone
Obeyed a summons covetous of truth.
From these wild rocks thy footsteps I will guide
To bowers in which thy fortune may be tried,
And one of the bright Three become thy happy
Bride.

1828.

XLI.

THE WISHING-GATE.

In the vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old highway leading to Ambleside, is a gate, which, time out of mind, has been called the Wishing-gate, from a belief that wishes formed or indulged there have a favorable issue.

Hope rules a land for ever green:
All powers that serve the bright-eyed Queen
Are confident and gay;

Clouds at her bidding disappear;
Points she to aught?—the bliss draws near
And Fancy smooths the way.

Not such the land of Wishes, — there
Dwell fruitless day-dreams, lawless prayer,
And thoughts with things at strife;
Yet how forlorn, should *ye* depart,
Ye superstitions of the *heart*,
How poor, were human life!

When magic lore abjured its might,
Ye did not forfeit one dear right,
One tender claim abate;
Witness this symbol of your sway,
Surviving near the public way,
The rustic Wishing-gate!

Inquire not if the Faery race
Shed kindly influence on the place,
Ere northward they retired;
If here a warrior left a spell,
Panting for glory as he fell;
Or here a saint expired.

Enough that all around is fair,
Composed with Nature's finest care,
And in her fondest love, —
Peace to embosom and content, —
To overawe the turbulent,
The selfish to reprove.

Yea! even the Stranger from afar,
Reclining on this moss-grown bar,
Unknowing, and unknown,
The infection of the ground partakes,
Longing for his Beloved, — who makes
All happiness her own.

Then why should conscious Spirits fear
The mystic stirrings that are here,
The ancient faith disclaim?
The local Genius ne'er befriends
Desires whose course in folly ends,
Whose just reward is shame.

Smile if thou wilt, but not in scorn,
If some, by ceaseless pains outworn,
Here crave an easier lot;
If some have thirsted to renew
A broken vow, or bind a true,
With firmer, holier knot.

And not in vain, when thoughts are cast
Upon the irrevocable past,
Some Penitent sincere
May for a worthier future sigh,
While trickles from his downcast eye
No unavailing tear.

The Worldling, pining to be freed
From turmoil, who would turn or speed
The current of his fate,

Might stop before this favored scene,
At Nature's call, nor blush to lean
Upon the Wishing-gate.

The Sage, who feels how blind, how weak
Is man, though loth such help to *seek*,
Yet, passing, here might pause,
And thirst for insight to allay
Misgiving, while the crimson day
In quietness withdraws;

Or when the church-clock's knell profound
To Time's first step across the bound
Of midnight makes reply;
Time pressing on with starry crest,
To filial sleep upon the breast
Of dread eternity.

1828.

XLII.

THE WISHING-GATE DESTROYED.

'T is gone,— with old belief and dream
That round it clung, and tempting scheme
Released from fear and doubt;
And the bright landscape too must lie,
By this blank wall from every eye
Relentlessly shut out.

Bear witness, ye who seldom passed
That opening, but a look ye cast
Upon the lake below,
What spirit-stirring power it gained
From faith which here was entertained,
Though reason might say no.

Blest is that ground, where, o'er the springs
Of history, Glory claps her wings,
Fame sheds the exulting tear;
Yet earth is wide, and many a nook
Unheard of is, like this, a book
For modest meanings dear.

It was in sooth a happy thought
That grafted, on so fair a spot,
So confident a token
Of coming good; — the charm is fled;
Indulgent centuries spun a thread,
Which one harsh day has broken.

Alas for him who gave the word!
Could he no sympathy afford,
Derived from earth or heaven,
To hearts so oft by hope betrayed,
Their very wishes wanted aid
Which here was freely given?

Where, for the love-lorn maiden's wound,
Will now so readily be found
A balm of expectation?

Anxious for far-off children, where
Shall mothers breathe a like sweet air
Of home-felt consolation!

And not unfelt will prove the loss
'Mid trivial care and petty cross
And each day's shallow grief;
Though the most easily beguiled
Were oft among the first that smiled
At their own fond belief.

If still the restless change we mourn,
A reconciling thought may turn
To harm that might lurk here,
Ere judgment prompted from within
Fit aims, with courage to begin,
And strength to persevere.

Not Fortune's slave is Man: our state
Enjoins, while firm resolves await
On wishes just and wise,
That strenuous action follow both,
And life be one perpetual growth
Of heavenward enterprise.

So taught, so trained, we boldly face
All accidents of time and place;
Whatever props may fail,
Trust in that sovereign law can spread
New glory o'er the mountain's head,
Fresh beauty through the vale.

That truth informing mind and heart,
The simplest cottager may part,
Ungrieved, with charm and spell;
And yet, lost Wishing-gate, to thee
The voice of grateful memory
Shall bid a kind farewell! *

XLIII.

THE PRIMROSE OF THE ROCK.

A Rock there is whose homely front
The passing traveller slights;
Yet there the glowworms hang their lamps,
Like stars, at various heights;
And one coy Primrose to that Rock
The vernal breeze invites.

What hideous warfare hath been waged,
What kingdoms overthrown,
Since first I spied that Primrose-tuft
And marked it for my own;
A lasting link in Nature's chain
From highest heaven let down!

The flowers, still faithful to the stems,
Their fellowship renew;

* See Note at the end of this Volume.

The stems are faithful to the root,
That worketh out of view;
And to the rock the root adheres
In every fibre true.

Close clings to earth the living rock,
Though threatening still to fall;
The earth is constant to her sphere;
And God upholds them all:
So blooms this lonely Plant, nor dreads
Her annual funeral.

* * * * *

Here closed the meditative strain;
But air breathed soft that day,
The hoary mountain-heights were cheered,
The sunny vale looked gay;
And to the Primrose of the Rock
I gave this after-lay.

I sang, — Let myriads of bright flowers,
Like thee, in field and grove
Revive unenvied; — mightier far
Than tremblings that reprove
Our vernal tendencies to hope,
Is God's redeeming love; —

That love which changed, for wan disease,
For sorrow that had bent
O'er hopeless dust, for withered age,
Their moral element,

And turned the thistles of a curse
To types beneficent.

Sin-blighted though we are, we too,
The reasoning Sons of Men,
From one oblivious winter called,
Shall rise, and breathe again;
And in eternal summer lose
Our threescore years and ten.

To humbleness of heart descends
This prescience from on high,
The faith that elevates the just,
Before and when they die;
And makes each soul a separate heaven,
A court for Deity.

1831.

XLIV.

PRESENTIMENTS.

PRESENTIMENTS! they judge not right
Who deem that ye from open light
Retire in fear of shame;
All *heaven-born* Instincts shun the touch
Of vulgar sense, — and, being such,
Such privilege ye claim

The tear whose source I could not guess,
The deep sigh that seemed fatherless,
  Were mine in early days;
And now, unforced by time to part
With fancy, I obey my heart,
  And venture on your praise.

What though some busy foes to good,
Too potent over nerve and blood,
  Lurk near you, and combine
To taint the health which ye infuse;
This hides not from the moral Muse
  Your origin divine.

How oft from you, derided Powers!
Comes Faith that in auspicious hours
  Builds castles, not of air:
Bodings unsanctioned by the will
Flow from your visionary skill,
  And teach us to beware.

The bosom-weight, your stubborn gift,
That no philosophy can lift,
  Shall vanish, if ye please,
Like morning mist: and, where it lay,
The spirits at your bidding play
  In gayety and ease.

Star-guided contemplations move
Through space, though calm, not raised above
  Prognostics that ye rule;

The naked Indian of the wild,
And haply, too, the cradled Child,
  Are pupils of your school.

But who can fathom your intents,
Number their signs or instruments?
  A rainbow, a sunbeam,
A subtle smell that Spring unbinds,
Dead pause abrupt of midnight winds
  An echo, or a dream.

The laughter of the Christmas hearth
With sighs of self-exhausted mirth
  Ye feelingly reprove;
And daily, in the conscious breast,
Your visitations are a test
  And exercise of love.

When some great change gives boundless scope
To an exulting Nation's hope,
  Oft, startled and made wise
By your low-breathed interpretings,
The simply-meek foretaste the springs
  Of bitter contraries.

Ye daunt the proud array of war,
Pervade the lonely ocean far
  As sail hath been unfurled;
For dancers in the festive hall
What ghastly partners hath your call
  Fetched from the shadowy world.

'T is said, that warnings ye dispense,
Emboldened by a keener sense;
That men have lived for whom,
With dread precision, ye made clear
The hour that in a distant year
Should knell them to the tomb.

Unwelcome insight! Yet there are
Blest times when mystery is laid bare,
Truth shows a glorious face,
While on that isthmus which commands
The councils of both worlds, she stands,
Sage Spirits! by your grace.

God, who instructs the brutes to scent
All changes of the element,
Whose wisdom fixed the scale
Of natures, for our wants provides
By higher, sometimes humbler, guides,
When lights of reason fail.

XLV.

VERNAL ODE.

Rerum Natura tota est nusquam magis quam in minimis.
PLIN. NAT. HIST.

I.

BENEATH the concave of an April sky,
When all the fields with freshest green were dight,
Appeared, in presence of the spiritual eye
That aids or supersedes our grosser sight,
The form and rich habiliments of one
Whose countenance bore resemblance to the sun,
When it reveals, in evening majesty,
Features half lost amid their own pure light.
Poised like a weary cloud, in middle air
He hung, — then floated with angelic ease
(Softening that bright effulgence by degrees)
Till he had reached a summit sharp and bare,
Where oft the venturous heifer drinks the noon-
tide breeze.
Upon the apex of that lofty cone
Alighted, there the Stranger stood alone;
Fair as a gorgeous fabric of the East
Suddenly raised by some enchanter's power,
Where nothing was; and firm as some old tower
Of Britain's realm, whose leafy crest
Waves high, embellished by a gleaming shower!

II.

Beneath the shadow of his purple wings
Rested a golden harp; — he touched the strings
And, after prelude of unearthly sound
Poured through the echoing hills around,
He sang: —

"No wintry desolations,
Scorching blight or noxious dew,
Affect my native habitations;
Buried in glory, far beyond the scope
Of man's inquiring gaze, but to his hope
Imaged, though faintly, in the hue
Profound of night's ethereal blue;
And in the aspect of each radiant orb; —
Some fixed, some wandering with no timid curb
But wandering star and fixed, to mortal eye,
Blended in absolute serenity,
And free from semblance of decline; —
Fresh as if Evening brought their natal hour,
Her darkness splendor gave, her silence power,
To testify of Love and Grace divine.

III.

"What if those bright fires
Shine subject to decay,
Sons haply of extinguished sires,
Themselves to lose their light, or pass away
Like clouds before the wind,
Be thanks poured out to Him whose hand bestows
Nightly, on human kind

That vision of endurance and repose.
— And though to every draught of vital breath
Renewed throughout the bounds of earth or ocean,
The melancholy gates of Death
Respond with sympathetic motion;
Though all that feeds on nether air,
Howe'er magnificent or fair,
Grows but to perish, and intrust
Its ruins to their kindred dust;
Yet, by the Almighty's ever-during care,
Her procreant vigils Nature keeps
Amid the unfathomable deeps;
And saves the peopled fields of earth
From dread of emptiness or dearth.
Thus, in their stations, lifting tow'rd the sky
The foliaged head in cloudlike majesty,
The shadow-casting race of trees survive:
Thus, in the train of Spring, arrive
Sweet flowers; — what living eye hath viewed
Their myriads? — endlessly renewed,
Wherever strikes the sun's glad ray;
Where'er the subtle waters stray;
Wherever sportive breezes bend
Their course or genial showers descend!
Mortals, rejoice! the very Angels quit
Their mansions unsusceptible of change,
Amid your pleasant bowers to sit,
And through your sweet vicissitudes to range!"

IV.

O, nursed at happy distance from the cares
Of a too-anxious world, mild pastoral Muse!
That, to the sparkling crown Urania wears,
And to her sister Clio's laurel wreath,
Prefer'st a garland culled from purple heath,
Or blooming thicket moist with morning dews;
Was such bright Spectacle vouchsafed to me?
And was it granted to the simple ear
Of thy contented votary
Such melody to hear!
Him rather suits it, side by side with thee,
Wrapped in a fit of pleasing indolence,
While thy tired lute hangs on the hawthorn-tree,
To lie and listen — till o'er-drowsèd sense
Sinks, hardly conscious of the influence —
To the soft murmur of the vagrant Bee.
— A slender sound! yet hoary Time
Doth to the *Soul* exalt it with the chime
Of all his years; — a company
Of ages coming, ages gone,
(Nations from before them sweeping,
Regions in destruction steeping,)
But every awful note in unison
With that faint utterance, which tells
Of treasure sucked from buds and bells,
For the pure keeping of those waxen cells;
Where She — a statist prudent to confer
Upon the common weal; a warrior bold,
Radiant all over with unburnished gold,

And armed with living spear for mortal fight;
A cunning forager
That spreads no waste; a social builder; one
In whom all busy offices unite
With all fine functions that afford delight —
Safe through the winter storm in quiet dwells!

v.

And is She brought within the power
Of vision? — o'er this tempting flower
Hovering until the petals stay
Her flight, and take its voice away! —
Observe each wing! — a tiny van!
The structure of her laden thigh,
How fragile! yet of ancestry
Mysteriously remote and high;
High as the imperial front of man;
The roseate bloom on woman's cheek;
The soaring eagle's curvèd beak;
The white plumes of the floating swan;
Old as the tiger's paw, the lion's mane
Ere shaken by that mood of stern disdain
At which the desert trembles. — Humming Bee!
Thy sting was needless then, perchance unknown;
The seeds of malice were not sown;
All creatures met in peace, from fierceness free,
And no pride blended with their dignity.
— Tears had not broken from their source;
Nor Anguish strayed from her Tartarean den;
The golden years maintained a course

Not undiversified, though smooth and even;
We were not mocked with glimpse and shadow
then;
Bright Seraphs mixed familiarly with men;
And earth and stars composed a universal heaven
1817.

XLVI.

DEVOTIONAL INCITEMENTS.

"Not to the earth confined,
Ascend to heaven."

WHERE will they stop, those breathing Powers,
The Spirits of the new-born flowers?
They wander with the breeze, they wind
Where'er the streams a passage find;
Up from their native ground they rise
In mute aërial harmonies;
From humble violet, modest thyme,
Exhaled, the essential odors climb,
As if no space below the sky
Their subtle flight could satisfy:
Heaven will not tax our thoughts with pride
If like ambition be *their* guide.

Roused by this kindliest of May showers,
The spirit-quickener of the flowers,

That with moist virtue softly cleaves
The buds, and freshens the young leaves,
The birds pour forth their souls in notes
Of rapture from a thousand throats, —
Here checked by too impetuous haste,
While there the music runs to waste
With bounty more and more enlarged,
Till the whole air is overcharged;
Give ear, O Man! to their appeal,
And thirst for no inferior zeal,
Thou, who canst *think* as well as feel.

Mount from the earth; aspire! aspire
So pleads the town's cathedral quire,
In strains that from their solemn height
Sink, to attain a loftier flight;
While incense from the altar breathes
Rich fragrance in embodied wreaths;
Or, flung from swinging censer, shrouds
The taper-lights, and curls in clouds
Around angelic Forms, the still
Creation of the painter's skill,
That on the service wait concealed
One moment, and the next revealed.
— Cast off your bonds, awake, arise,
And for no transient ecstasies!
What else can mean the visual plea
Of still or moving imagery, —
The iterated summons loud,
Not wasted on the attendant crowd,

Nor wholly lost upon the throng
Hurrying the busy streets along?

Alas! the sanctities combined
By art to unsensualize the mind,
Decay and languish; or, as creeds
And humors change, are spurned like weeds:
The priests are from their altars thrust;
Temples are levelled with the dust;
And solemn rites and awful forms
Founder amid fanatic storms.
Yet evermore, through years renewed
In undisturbed vicissitude
Of seasons balancing their flight
On the swift wings of day and night,
Kind Nature keeps a heavenly door
Wide open for the scattered Poor.
Where flower-breathed incense to the skies
Is wafted in mute harmonies;
And ground fresh-cloven by the plough
Is fragrant with a humbler vow;
Where birds and brooks from leafy dells
Chime forth unwearied canticles,
And vapors magnify and spread
The glory of the sun's bright head, —
Still constant in her worship, still
Conforming to the Eternal Will,
Whether men sow or reap the fields,
Divine monition Nature yields,
That not by bread alone we live,

Or what a hand of flesh can give;
That every day should leave some part
Free for a sabbath of the heart:
So shall the seventh be truly blest,
From morn to eve, with hallowed rest.

1831.

XLVII.

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK.

WOULDST thou be taught, when sleep has taken flight,
By a sure voice that can most sweetly tell,
How far off yet a glimpse of morning light,
And if to lure the truant back be well,
Forbear to covet a Repeater's stroke,
That, answering to thy touch, will sound the hour;
Better provide thee with a Cuckoo-clock
For service hung behind thy chamber door;
And in due time the soft, spontaneous shock,
The double note, as if with living power,
Will to composure lead, or make thee blithe as bird in bower.

List, Cuckoo! — Cuckoo! — oft though tempests howl,
Or nipping frost remind thee trees are bare,

How cattle pine, and droop the shivering fowl,
Thy spirits will seem to feed on balmy air:
I speak with knowledge, — by that Voice beguiled,
Thou wilt salute old memories as they throng
Into thy heart; and fancies, running wild
Through fresh green fields, and budding groves among,
Will make thee happy, happy as a child;
Of sunshine wilt thou think, and flowers, and song,
And breathe as in a world where nothing can go wrong.

And know, that, even for him who shuns the day
And nightly tosses on a bed of pain;
Whose joys, from all but memory swept away,
Must come unhoped for, if they come again;
Know, that, for him whose waking thoughts, severe
As his distress is sharp, would scorn my theme,
The mimic notes, striking upon his ear
In sleep, and intermingling with his dream,
Could from sad regions send him to a dear
Delightful land of verdure, shower, and gleam,
To mock the *wandering* Voice beside some haunted stream.

O bounty without measure! while the grace
Of Heaven doth in such wise, from humblest springs,
Pour pleasure forth, and solaces that trace

A mazy course along familiar things,
Well may our hearts have faith that blessings come,
Streaming from founts above the starry sky,
With angels, when their own untroubled home
They leave, and speed on nightly embassy
To visit earthly chambers, — and for whom?
Yea, both for souls who God's forbearance try,
And those that seek his help, and for his mercy
sigh.

XLVIII.

TO THE CLOUDS.

Army of Clouds! ye wingèd Host in troops
Ascending from behind the motionless brow
Of that tall rock, as from a hidden world,
O whither with such eagerness of speed?
What seek ye, or what shun ye? of the gale
Companions, fear ye to be left behind,
Or, racing o'er your blue, ethereal field,
Contend ye with each other? of the sea
Children, thus post ye over vale and height
To sink upon your mother's lap, and rest?
Or were ye rightlier hailed, when first mine eyes
Beheld in your impetuous march the likeness
Of a wide army pressing on to meet
Or overtake some unknown enemy? —

But your smooth motions suit a peaceful aim;
And Fancy, not less aptly pleased, compares
Your squadrons to an endless flight of birds
Aerial, upon due migration bound
To milder climes; or rather do ye urge
In caravan your hasty pilgrimage,
To pause at last on more aspiring heights
Than these, and utter your devotion there
With thundrous voice? Or are ye jubilant,
And would ye, tracking your proud lord, the Sun,
Be present at his setting; or the pomp
Of Persian mornings would ye fill, and stand
Poising your splendors high above the heads
Of worshippers kneeling to their up-risen God?
Whence, whence, ye Clouds! this eagerness of speed?
Speak, silent creatures. — They are gone, are fled,
Buried together in yon gloomy mass
That loads the middle heaven; and clear and bright
And vacant doth the region which they thronged
Appear; a calm descent of sky conducting
Down to the unapproachable abyss,
Down to that hidden gulf from which they rose
To vanish, — fleet as days and months and years,
Fleet as the generations of mankind,
Power, glory, empire, as the world itself,
The lingering world, when time had ceased to be.
But the winds roar, shaking the rooted trees,
And see! a bright precursor to a train

Perchance as numerous, overpeers the rock
That sullenly refuses to partake
Of the wild impulse. From a fount of life
Invisible, the long procession moves
Luminous or gloomy, welcome to the vale
Which they are entering, welcome to mine eye
That sees them, to my soul that owns in them,
And in the bosom of the firmament
O'er which they move, wherein they are contained,
A type of her capacious self and all
Her restless progeny.
A humble walk
Here is my body doomed to tread, this path,
A little hoary line and faintly traced,
Work, shall we call it, of the shepherd's foot
Or of his flock? — joint vestige of them both.
I pace it unrepining, for my thoughts
Admit no bondage and my words have wings.
Where is the Orphean lyre, or Druid harp,
To accompany the verse? The mountain blast
Shall be our *hand* of music; he shall sweep
The rocks, and quivering trees, and billowy lake,
And search the fibres of the caves, and they
Shall answer, for our song is of the Clouds
And the wind loves them; and the gentle gales —
Which by their aid reclothe the naked lawn
With annual verdure, and revive the woods,
And moisten the parched lips of thirsty flowers —
Love them; and every idle breeze of air
Bends to the favorite burden Moon and stars

Keep their most solemn vigils when the Clouds
Watch also, shifting peaceably their place
Like bands of ministering Spirits, or when they lie
As if some Proteau art the change had wrought,
In listless quiet o'er the ethereal deep
Scattered, a Cyclades of various shapes
And all degrees of beauty. O ye Lightnings!
Ye are their perilous offspring; and the Sun —
Source inexhaustible of life and joy,
And type of man's far-darting reason, therefore
In old time worshipped as the god of verse,
A blazing intellectual deity —
Loves his own glory in their looks, and showers
Upon that unsubstantial brotherhood
Visions with all but beatific light
Enriched, — too transient were they not renewed
From age to age, and did not, while we gaze
In silent rapture, credulous desire
Nourish the hope that memory lacks not power
To keep the treasure unimpaired. Vain thought!
Yet why repine, created as we are
For joy and rest, albeit to find them only
Lodged in the bosom of eternal things?

XLIX.

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF THE BIRD OF PARADISE.

The gentlest Poet, with free thoughts endowed,
And a true master of the glowing strain,
Might scan the narrow province with disdain
That to the Painter's skill is here allowed.
This, this the Bird of Paradise! disclaim
The daring thought, forget the name;
This the Sun's Bird, whom Glendoveers might own
As no unworthy Partner in their flight
Through seas of ether, where the ruffling sway
Of nether air's rude billows is unknown;
Whom Sylphs, if e'er for casual pastime they
Through India's spicy regions wing their way,
Might bow to as their Lord. What character,
O sovereign Nature! I appeal to thee,
Of all thy feathered progeny
Is so unearthly, and what shape so fair?
So richly decked in variegated down,
Green, sable, shining yellow, shadowy brown,
Tints softly with each other blended,
Hues doubtfully begun and ended;
Or intershooting, and to sight
Lost and recovered, as the rays of light
Glance on the conscious plumes touched here and there?
Full surely, when with such proud gifts of life

Began the pencil's strife,
O'erweening Art was caught as in a snare.

A sense of seemingly presumptuous wrong
Gave the first impulse to the Poet's song;
But, of his scorn repenting soon, he drew
A juster judgment from a calmer view;
And, with a spirit freed from discontent,
Thankfully took an effort that was meant
Not with God's bounty, Nature's love, to vie,
Or made with hope to please that inward eye
Which ever strives in vain itself to satisfy,
But to recall the truth by some faint trace
Of power ethereal and celestial grace,
That in the living Creature find on earth a place.

L.

A JEWISH FAMILY.

IN A SMALL VALLEY OPPOSITE ST. GOAR, UPON THE RHINE.

Genius of Raphael! if thy wings
Might bear thee to this glen,
With faithful memory left of things
To pencil dear and pen,
Thou wouldst forego the neighboring Rhine,
And all his majesty,
A studious forehead to incline
O'er this poor family.

The Mother, — her thou must have seen,
In spirit, ere she came
To dwell these rifted rocks between,
Or found on earth a name;
An image, too, of that sweet Boy,
Thy inspirations give, —
Of playfulness, and love, and joy,
Predestined here to live.

Downcast, or shooting glances far,
How beautiful his eyes,
That blend the nature of the star
With that of summer skies!
I speak as if of sense beguiled;
Uncounted months are gone,
Yet am I with the Jewish Child,
That exquisite Saint John.

I see the dark-brown curls, the brow,
The smooth, transparent skin,
Refined, as with intent to show
The holiness within;
The grace of parting Infancy
By blushes yet untamed;
Age faithful to the mother's knee,
Nor of her arms ashamed.

Two lovely Sisters, still and sweet
As flowers, stand side by side;
Their soul-subduing looks might cheat
The Christian of his pride:

Such beauty hath the Eternal poured
Upon them not forlorn,
Though of a lineage once abhorred,
Nor yet redeemed from scorn.

Mysterious safeguard, that, in spite
Of poverty and wrong,
Doth here preserve a living light,
From Hebrew fountains sprung;
That gives this ragged group to cast
Around the dell a gleam
Of Palestine, of glory past,
And proud Jerusalem!

1828.

LI.

ON THE POWER OF SOUND.

ARGUMENT.

The Ear addressed, as occupied by a spiritual functionary, in communion with sounds, individual, or combined in studied harmony. — Sources and effects of those sounds (to the close of 6th Stanza). — The power of music, whence proceeding, exemplified in the idiot. — Origin of music, and its effect in early ages, — how produced (to the middle of 10th Stanza). — The mind recalled to sounds acting casually and severally. — Wish uttered (11th Stanza) that these could be united into a scheme or system for moral interests and intellectual contemplation. — (Stanza 12th.) The Pythagorean

theory of numbers and music, with their supposed power over the motions of the universe; — imaginations consonant with such a theory. — Wish expressed (in 11th Stanza) realized, in some degree, by the representation of all sounds under the form of thanksgiving to the Creator. — (Last Stanza.) The destruction of earth and the planetary system, — the survival of audible harmony, and its support in the Divine Nature, as revealed in Holy Writ

I.

THY functions are ethereal,
As if within thee dwelt a glancing mind,
Organ of vision! And a Spirit aërial
Informs the cell of Hearing, dark and blind;
Intricate labyrinth, more dread for thought
To enter than oracular cave;
Strict passage, through which sighs are brought,
And whispers for the heart, their slave;
And shrieks, that revel in abuse
Of shivering flesh; and warbled air,
Whose piercing sweetness can unloose
The chains of frenzy, or entice a smile
Into the ambush of despair;
Hosannas pealing down the long-drawn aisle,
And requiems answered by the pulse that beats
Devoutly, in life's last retreats!

II.

The headlong streams and fountains
Serve Thee, invisible Spirit, with untired powers;
Cheering the wakeful tent on Syrian mountains,
They lull perchance ten thousand thousand flowers.

That roar, the prowling lion's *Here I am*,
How fearful to the desert wide!
That bleat, how tender! of the dam
Calling a straggler to her side.
Shout, cuckoo! — let the vernal soul
Go with thee to the frozen zone;
Toll from thy loftiest perch, lone bell-bird, toll
At the still hour to Mercy dear,
Mercy from her twilight throne
Listening to nun's faint throb of holy fear,
To sailor's prayer breathed from a darkening sea,
Or widow's cottage-lullaby.

III.

Ye Voices, and ye Shadows
And Images of voice, — to hound and horn
From rocky steep and rock-bestudded meadows
Flung back, and, in the sky's blue caves, reborn, —
On with your pastime! till the church-tower bells
A greeting give of measured glee;
And milder echoes from their cells
Repeat the bridal symphony.
Then, or far earlier, let us rove
Where mists are breaking up or gone,
And from aloft look down into a cove
Besprinkled with a careless choir,
Happy milkmaids, one by one
Scattering a ditty each to her desire,
A liquid concert matchless by nice Art,
A stream as if from one full heart.

IV.

Blest be the song that brightens
The blind man's gloom, exalts the veteran's mirth;
Unscorned the peasant's whistling breath, that lightens
His duteous toil of furrowing the green earth.
For the tired slave, Song lifts the languid oar,
And bids it aptly fall, with chime
That beautifies the fairest shore,
And mitigates the harshest clime.
Yon pilgrims see, — in lagging file
They move; but soon the appointed way
A choral *Ave Marie* shall beguile,
And to their hope the distant shrine
Glisten with a livelier ray:
Nor friendless he, the prisoner in the mine,
Who from the well-spring of his own clear breast
Can draw, and sing his griefs to rest.

V.

When civic renovation
Dawns on a kingdom, and for needful haste
Best eloquence avails not, Inspiration
Mounts with a tune, that travels like a blast
Piping through cave and battlemented tower;
Then starts the sluggard, pleased to meet
That voice of Freedom, in its power
Of promises, shrill, wild, and sweet!
Who, from a martial *pageant*, spreads
Incitements of the battle-day,

Thrilling the unweaponed crowd with plumeless
heads? —
Even She whose Lydian airs inspire
Peaceful striving, gentle play
Of timid hope and innocent desire
Shot from the dancing Graces, as they move
Fanned by the plausive wings of Love.

VI.

How oft along thy mazes,
Regent of sound, have dangerous Passions trod!
O Thou, through whom the temple rings with
praises,
And blackening clouds in thunder speak of God,
Betray not by the cozenage of sense
Thy votaries, wooingly resigned
To a voluptuous influence
That taints the purer, better mind;
But lead sick Fancy to a harp
That hath in noble tasks been tried;
And, if the virtuous feel a pang too sharp,
Soothe it into patience, — stay
The uplifted arm of Suicide;
And let some mood of thine in firm array
Knit every thought the impending issue needs,
Ere martyr burns, or patriot bleeds!

VII.

As Conscience, to the centre
Of being, smites with irresistible pain,

So shall a solemn cadence, if it enter
The mouldy vaults of the dull idiot's brain,
Transmute him to a wretch from quiet hurled, —
Convulsed as by a jarring din;
And then aghast, as at the world
Of reason partially let in
By concords winding with a sway
Terrible for sense and soul!
Or, awed, he weeps, struggling to quell dismay.
Point not these mysteries to an Art
Lodged above the starry pole, —
Pure modulations flowing from the heart
Of Divine Love, where Wisdom, Beauty, Truth,
With Order dwell, in endless youth?

VIII.

Oblivion may not cover
All treasures hoarded by the miser, Time.
Orphean Insight! truth's undaunted lover,
To the first leagues of tutored passion climb,
Where Music deigned within this grosser sphere
Her subtle essence to enfold,
And voice and shell drew forth a tear
Softer than Nature's self could mould.
Yet *strenuous* was the infant Age:
Art, daring because souls could feel,
Stirred nowhere but an urgent equipage
Of wrapt imagination sped her march
Through the realms of woe and weal:
Hell to the lyre bowed low the upper arch

Rejoiced that clamorous spell and magic verse
Her wan disasters could disperse.

IX.

The Gift to King Amphion
That walled a city with its melody
Was for belief no dream: — thy skill, Arion!
Could humanize the creatures of the sea,
Where men were monsters. A last grace he craves
Leave for one chant; the dulcet sound
Steals from the deck o'er willing waves,
And listening dolphins gather round.
Self-cast, as with a desperate course,
'Mid that strange audience, he bestrides
A proud One docile as a managed horse;
And singing, while the accordant hand
Sweeps his harp, the Master rides;
So shall he touch at length a friendly strand,
And he, with his preserver, shine star-bright
In memory, through silent night.

X.

The pipe of Pan, to shepherds
Couched in the shadow of Mænalian pines,
Was passing sweet; the eyeballs of the leopards,
That in high triumph drew the Lord of vines,
How did they sparkle to the cymbal's clang!
While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground
In cadence, and Silenus swang
This way and that, with wild-flowers crowned.

To life, to *life* give back thine ear:
Ye who are longing to be rid
Of fable, though to truth subservient, hear
The little sprinkling of cold earth that fell
Echoed from the coffin-lid;
The convict's summons in the steeple's knell;
"The vain distress-gun," from a leeward shore,
Repeated, — heard, and heard no more!

XI.

For terror, joy, or pity,
Vast is the compass and the swell of notes:
From the babe's first cry to voice of regal city,
Rolling a solemn, sea-like bass, that floats
Far as the woodlands, — with the trill to blend
Of that shy songstress, whose love-tale
Might tempt an angel to descend,
While hovering o'er the moonlight vale.
Ye wandering Utterances, has Earth no scheme,
No scale of moral music, to unite
Powers that survive but in the faintest dream
Of memory? — O that ye might stoop to bear
Chains, such precious chains of sight
As labored minstrelsies through ages wear!
O for a balance fit the truth to tell
Of the Unsubstantial, pondered well!

XII.

By one pervading spirit
Of tones and numbers all things are controlled,

As sages taught, where faith was found to merit
Initiation in that mystery old.
The heavens, whose aspect makes our minds as still
As they themselves appear to be,
Innumerable voices fill
With everlasting harmony;
The towering headlands, crowned with mist,
Their feet among the billows, know
That Ocean is a mighty harmonist;
Thy pinions, universal Air,
Ever waving to and fro,
Are delegates of harmony, and bear
Strains that support the Seasons in their round;
Stern Winter loves a dirge-like sound.

XIII.

Break forth into thanksgiving,
Ye banded instruments of wind and chords!
Unite, to magnify the Ever-living,
Your inarticulate notes with the voice of words!
Nor hushed be service from the lowing mead,
Nor mute the forest hum of noon;
Thou too be heard, lone eagle! freed
From snowy peak and cloud, attune
Thy hungry barkings to the hymn
Of joy, that from her utmost walls
The six-days' Work by flaming Seraphim
Transmits to Heaven! As Deep to Deep
Shouting through one valley calls,
All worlds, all natures, mood and measure keep

For praise and ceaseless gratulation, poured
Into the ear of God, their Lord!

XIV.

A Voice to Light gave Being;
To Time, and Man his earth-born chronicler;
A Voice shall finish doubt and dim foreseeing,
And sweep away life's visionary stir;
The trumpet, (we, intoxicate with pride.
Arm at its blast for deadly wars,)
To archangelic lips applied,
The grave shall open, quench the stars.
O Silence! are Man's noisy years
No more than moments of thy life?
Is Harmony, blest queen of smiles and tears,
With her smooth tones and discords just,
Tempered into rapturous strife,
Thy destined bond-slave? No! though earth be dust
And vanish, though the heavens dissolve, her stay
Is in the WORD, that shall not pass away.

PETER BELL.

A TALE.

What 's in a *name*?
* * * * *
Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar!

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ., P. L., ETC., ETC.

MY DEAR FRIEND: — The Tale of Peter Bell, which I now introduce to your notice, and to that of the Public, has, in its manuscript state, nearly survived its *minority*; — for it first saw the light in the summer of 1798. During this long interval, pains have been taken at different times to make the production less unworthy of a favorable reception; or, rather, to fit it for filling *permanently* a station, however humble, in the literature of our country. This has, indeed, been the aim of all my endeavors in Poetry, which, you know, have been sufficiently laborious to prove that I deem the Art not lightly to be approached; and that the attainment of excellence in it may laudably be made the principal object of intellectual pursuit by any man, who, with reasonable consideration of circumstances, has faith in his own impulses.

The Poem of Peter Bell, as the Prologue will show, was composed under a belief that the Imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency, but that, though such agency be excluded, the faculty may be called forth as imperiously, and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents, within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life. Since that Prologue was written, *you* have exhibited most splendid effects of judicious daring, in the opposite and usual course. Let this acknowledgment make my peace with the lovers of the super

natural; and I am persuaded it will be admitted, that to you, as a master in that province of the Art, the following Tale, whether from contrast or congruity, is not an unappropriate offering. Accept it, then, as a public testimony of affectionate admiration from one with whose name yours has been often coupled (to use your own words) for evil and for good; and believe me to be, with earnest wishes that life and health may be granted you to complete the many important works in which you are engaged, and with high respect,

Most faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, *April* 7, 1819.

PROLOGUE.

THERE 'S something in a flying horse,
There 's something in a huge balloon;
But through the clouds I 'll never float
Until I have a little Boat,
Shaped like the crescent-moon.

And now I *have* a little Boat,
In shape a very crescent-moon:
Fast through the clouds my Boat can sail;
But if perchance your faith should fail,
Look up — and you shall see me soon!

The woods, my Friends, are round you roaring,
Rocking and roaring like a sea;
The noise of danger 's in your ears,
And ye have all a thousand fears
Both for my little Boat and me!

Meanwhile, untroubled I admire
The pointed horns of my canoe;
And, did not pity touch my breast,
To see how ye are all distrest,
Till my ribs ached I 'd laugh at you!

Away we go, my Boat and I, —
Frail man ne'er sat in such another;
Whether among the winds we strive,
Or deep into the clouds we dive,
Each is contented with the other.

Away we go, — and what care we
For treasons, tumults, and for wars?
We are as calm in our delight
As is the crescent-moon so bright
Among the scattered stars.

Up goes my Boat among the stars
Through many a breathless field of light,
Through many a long blue field of ether,
Leaving ten thousand stars beneath her:
Up goes my little Boat so bright!

The Crab, the Scorpion, and the Bull,—
We pry among them all; have shot
High o'er the red-haired race of Mars,
Covered from top to toe with scars; —
Such company I like it not!

The towns in Saturn are decayed,
And melancholy Spectres throng them; —
The Pleiads, that appear to kiss
Each other in the vast abyss,
With joy I sail among them.

Swift Mercury resounds with mirth,
Great Jove is full of stately bowers;
But these, and all that they contain,
What are they to that tiny grain,
That little Earth of ours?

Then back to Earth, the dear green Earth: —
Whole ages if I here should roam,
The world of my remarks and me
Would not a whit the better be:
I 've left my heart at home.

See! there she is, the matchless Earth!
There spreads the famed Pacific Ocean!
Old Andes thrusts yon craggy spear
Through the gray clouds; the Alps are here,
Like waters in commotion!

Yon tawny slip is Libya's sands;
That silver thread, the river Dnieper;
And look, where, clothed in brightest green,
Is a sweet Isle, of isles the Queen:
Ye Fairies, from all evil keep her!

And see the town where I was born!
Around those happy fields we span
In boyish gambols; — I was lost
Where I have been, but on this coast
I feel I am a man.

Never did fifty things at once
Appear so lovely, — never, never;
How tunefully the forests ring!
To hear the Earth's soft murmuring,
Thus could I hang for ever!

"Shame on you!" cried my little Boat;
"Was ever such a homesick Loon,
Within a living Boat to sit,
And make no better use of it, —
A Boat twin-sister of the crescent-moon!

"Ne'er in the breast of full-grown Poet
Fluttered so faint a heart before; —
Was it the music of the spheres
That overpowered your mortal ears?
— Such din shall trouble them no more.

"These nether precincts do not lack
Charms of their own; — then come with me
I want a comrade, and for you
There 's nothing that I would not do;
Naught is there that you shall not see.

"Haste! and above Siberian snows
We 'll sport amid the boreal morning;
Will mingle with her lustres gliding
Among the stars, the stars now hiding,
And now the stars adorning.

"I know the secrets of a land
Where human foot did never stray;
Fair is that land as evening skies,
And cool, though in the depth it lies
Of burning Africa.

"Or we 'll into the realm of Faery,
Among the lovely shades of things;
The shadowy forms of mountains bare,
And streams, and bowers, and ladies fair,
The shades of palaces and kings!

"Or, if you thirst with hardy zeal
Less quiet regions to explore,
Prompt voyage shall to you reveal
How earth and heaven are taught to feel
The might of magic lore!"

"My little vagrant Form of light,
My gay and beautiful Canoe,
Well have you played your friendly part;
As kindly take what from my heart
Experience forces, — then adieu!

"Temptation lurks among your words;
But, while these pleasures you 're pursuing
Without impediment or let,
No wonder if you quite forget
What on the Earth is doing.

"There was a time when all mankind
Did listen with a faith sincere
To tuneful tongues in mystery versed;
Then Poets fearlessly rehearsed
The wonders of a wild career.

"Go, — (but the world 's a sleepy world,
And 't is, I fear, an age too late,)—
Take with you some ambitious Youth!
For, restless Wanderer! I, in truth,
Am all unfit to be your mate.

"Long have I loved what I behold,
The night that calms, the day that cheers
The common growth of Mother Earth
Suffices me, — her tears, her mirth,
Her humblest mirth and tears.

"The dragon's wing, the magic ring,
I shall not covet for my dower,
If I along that lowly way
With sympathetic heart may stray,
And with a soul of power.

"These given, what more need I desire
To stir, to soothe, or elevate?
What nobler marvels than the mind
May in life's daily prospect find,
May find or there create?

"A potent wand doth Sorrow wield;
What spell so strong as guilty Fear!
Repentance is a tender Sprite;
If aught on earth have heavenly might
'T is lodged within her silent tear.

"But grant my wishes, — let us now
Descend from this ethereal height;
Then take thy way, adventurous Skiff,
More daring far than Hippogriff,
And be thy own delight!

"To the stone-table in my garden,
Loved haunt of many a summer hour,
The Squire is come: his daughter Bess
Beside him in the cool recess
Sits blooming like a flower.

"With these are many more convened;
They know not I have been so far; —
I see them there, in number nine,
Beneath the spreading Weymouth pine!
I see them, — there they are!

"There sits the Vicar and his Dame;
And there my good friend, Stephen Otter;
And, ere the light of evening fail,
To them I must relate the Tale
Of Peter Bell the Potter."

Off flew the Boat, — away she flees,
Spurning her freight with indignation!
And I, as well as I was able,
On two poor legs, toward my stone table
Limped on with sore vexation.

"O, here he is!" cried little Bess, —
She saw me at the garden door;
"We 've waited anxiously and long,"
They cried, and all around me throng,
Full nine of them or more!

"Reproach me not, — your fears be still, —
Be thankful we again have met; —
Resume, my Friends! within the shade
Your seats, and quickly shall be paid
The well-remembered debt."

I spake with faltering voice, like one
Not wholly rescued from the pale
Of a wild dream, or worse illusion;
But, straight, to cover my confusion,
Began the promised Tale.

PART FIRST.

All by the moonlight river-side
Groaned the poor Beast,—alas! in vain;
The staff was raised to loftier height,
And the blows fell with heavier weight
As Peter struck, and struck again.

"Hold!" cried the Squire, "against the rules
Of common sense you're surely sinning:
This leap is for us all too bold;
Who Peter was, let that be told,
And start from the beginning."

——"A Potter,* Sir, he was by trade,"
Said I, becoming quite collected;
"And wheresoever he appeared,
Full twenty times was Peter feared
For once that Peter was respected.

"He two-and-thirty years or more
Had been a wild and woodland rover;
Had heard the Atlantic surges roar
On farthest Cornwall's rocky shore,
And trod the cliffs of Dover.

"And he had seen Caernarvon's towers,
And well he knew the spire of Sarum;

* In the dialect of the North a hawker of earthen-ware is thus designated.

And he had been where Lincoln bell
Flings o'er the fen that ponderous knell, —
A far-renowned alarum.

"At Doncaster, at York, and Leeds,
And merry Carlisle, had he been;
And all along the Lowlands fair,
All through the bonny shire of Ayr;
And far as Aberdeen.

"And he had been at Inverness;
And Peter, by the mountain rills,
Had danced his round with Highland lasses;
And he had lain beside his asses
On lofty Cheviot Hills:

"And he had trudged through Yorkshire dales,
Among the rocks and winding *scars;*
Where deep and low the hamlets lie
Beneath their little patch of sky
And little lot of stars:

"And all along the indented coast,
Bespattered with the salt-sea foam;
Where'er a knot of houses lay,
On headland, or in hollow bay; —
Sure never man like him did roam!

"As well might Peter in the Fleet
Have been fast bound, a begging debtor;

He travelled here, he travelled there; —
But not the value of a hair
Was heart or head the better.

"He roved among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell;
They were his dwellings night and day, —
But Nature ne'er could find the way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

"In vain, through every changeful year,
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

"Small change it made in Peter's heart
To see his gentle panniered train
With more than vernal pleasure feeding,
Where'er the tender grass was leading
Its earliest green along the lane.

"In vain, through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

"At noon, when by the forest's edge
He lay beneath the branches high,

The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky!

"On a fair prospect some have looked
And felt, as I have heard them say,
As if the moving time had been
A thing as steadfast as the scene
On which they gazed themselves away.

"Within the breast of Peter Bell
These silent raptures found no place;
He was a Carl as wild and rude
As ever hue-and-cry pursued,
As ever ran a felon's race.

"Of all that lead a lawless life,
Of all that love their lawless lives,
In city or in village small,
He was the wildest of them all;—
He had a dozen wedded wives.

"Nay, start not!—wedded wives, and twelve
But how one wife could e'er come near him,
In simple truth I cannot tell;
For, be it said of Peter Bell,
To see him was to fear him.

Though Nature could not touch his heart
By lovely forms, and silent weather,

And tender sounds, yet you might see
At once, that Peter Bell and she
Had often been together.

" A savage wildness round him hung,
As of a dweller out of doors;
In his whole figure and his mien
A savage character was seen
Of mountains and of dreary moors.

" To all the unshaped half-human thoughts
Which solitary Nature feeds
'Mid summer storms or winter's ice,
Had Peter joined whatever vice
The cruel city breeds.

" His face was keen as is the wind
That cuts along the hawthorn-fence;
Of courage you saw little there,
But, in its stead, a medley air
Of cunning and of impudence.

" He had a dark and sidelong walk,
And long and slouching was his gait;
Beneath his looks so bare and bold,
You might perceive, his spirit cold
Was playing with some inward bait.

" His forehead wrinkled was and furred:
A work, one half of which was done

By thinking of his '*whens*' and '*hows*';
And half, by knitting of his brows
Beneath the glaring sun.

"There was a hardness in his cheek,
There was a hardness in his eye,
As if the man had fixed his face,
In many a solitary place,
Against the wind and open sky!"

One night, (and now, my little Bess!
We 've reached at last the promised Tale,)
One beautiful November night,
When the full moon was shining bright
Upon the rapid river Swale,

Along the river's winding banks
Peter was travelling all alone; —
Whether to buy or sell, or led
By pleasure running in his head,
To me was never known.

He trudged along through copse and brake.
He trudged along o'er hill and dale;
Nor for the moon cared he a tittle,
And for the stars he cared as little,
And for the murmuring river Swale.

But chancing to espy a path
That promised to cut short the way,
As many a wiser man hath done,
He left a trusty guide for one
That might his steps betray.

To a thick wood he soon is brought
Where cheerily his course he weaves,
And whistling loud may yet be heard,
Though often buried, like a bird
Darkling, among the boughs and leaves.

But quickly Peter's mood is changed,
And on he drives with cheeks that burn
In downright fury and in wrath; —
There 's little sign the treacherous path
Will to the road return!

The path grows dim, and dimmer still;
Now up, now down, the Rover wends,
With all the sail that he can carry,
Till brought to a deserted quarry, —
And there the pathway ends.

He paused, — for shadows of strange shape,
Massy and black, before him lay;
But through the dark, and through the cold,
And through the yawning fissures old,
Did Peter boldly press his way

Right through the quarry; — and behold
A scene of soft and lovely hue!
Where blue and gray, and tender green,
Together make as sweet a scene
As ever human eye did view.

Beneath the clear blue sky he saw
A little field of meadow-ground;
But field or meadow name it not;
Call it of earth a small green plot,
With rocks encompassed round.

The Swale flowed under the gray rocks,
But he flowed quiet and unseen; —
You need a strong and stormy gale
To bring the noises of the Swale
To that green spot, so calm and green!

And is there no one dwelling here,
No hermit with his beads and glass?
And does no little cottage look
Upon this soft and fertile nook?
Does no one live near this green grass?

Across the deep and quiet spot
Is Peter driving through the grass,
And now has reached the skirting trees,
When, turning round his head, he sees
A solitary Ass.

"A prize!" cries Peter; but he first
Must spy about him far and near:
There 's not a single house in sight,
No woodman's hut, no cottage light,—
Peter, you need not fear!

There 's nothing to be seen but woods,
And rocks that spread a hoary gleam,
And this one Beast, that from the bed
Of the green meadow hangs his head
Over the silent stream.

His head is with a halter bound;
The halter seizing, Peter leapt
Upon the Creature's back, and plied
With ready heels his shaggy side;
But still the Ass the station kept.

Then Peter gave a sudden jerk,
A jerk that from a dungeon-floor
Would have pulled up an iron ring;
But still the heavy-headed Thing
Stood just as he had stood before!

Quoth Peter, leaping from his seat,
"There is some plot against me laid";
Once more the little meadow-ground
And all the hoary cliffs around
He cautiously surveyed.

All, all is silent, — rocks and woods.
All still and silent, far and near!
Only the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turns round his long left ear.

Thought Peter, What can mean all this?
Some ugly witchcraft must be here!
— Once more the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turned round his long left ear.

Suspicion ripened into dread;
Yet, with deliberate action slow,
His staff high raising, in the pride
Of skill, upon the sounding hide
He dealt a sturdy blow.

The poor Ass staggered with the shock;
And then, as if to take his ease,
In quiet, uncomplaining mood,
Upon the spot where he had stood,
Dropped gently down upon his knees.

As gently on his side he fell,
And by the river's brink did lie;
And, while he lay like one that mourned,
The patient Beast on Peter turned
His shining hazel eye.

'T was but one mild, reproachful look,
A look more tender than severe:
And straight in sorrow, not in dread,
He turned the eyeball in his head
Towards the smooth river deep and clear.

Upon the Beast the sapling rings;
His lank sides heaved, his limbs they stirred;
He gave a groan, and then another,
Of that which went before the brother,
And then he gave a third.

All by the moonlight river-side
He gave three miserable groans;
And not till now hath Peter seen
How gaunt the Creature is, — how lean
And sharp his staring bones!

With legs stretched out and stiff he lay: —
No word of kind commiseration
Fell at the sight from Peter's tongue;
With hard contempt his heart was wrung,
With hatred and vexation.

The meagre Beast lay still as death;
And Peter's lips with fury quiver;
Quoth he, "You little mulish dog,
I 'll fling your carcass like a log
Head-foremost down the river!"

An impious oath confirmed the threat, —
Whereat from the earth on which he lay
To all the echoes, south and north,
And east and west, the Ass sent forth
A long and clamorous bray!

This outcry, on the heart of Peter,
Seems like a note of joy to strike, —
Joy at the heart of Peter knocks;
But in the echo of the rocks
Was something Peter did not like.

Whether to cheer his coward breast,
Or that he could not break the chain,
In this serene and solemn hour,
Twined round him by demoniac power,
To the blind work he turned again.

Among the rocks and winding crags;
Among the mountains far away;
Once more the Ass did lengthen out
More ruefully a deep-drawn shout,
The hard dry seesaw of his horrible bray!

What is there now in Peter's heart?
Or whence the might of this strange sound?
The moon uneasy looked and dimmer,
The broad blue heavens appeared to glimmer
And the rocks staggered all around.

From Peter's hand the sapling dropped!
Threat has he none to execute;
"If any one should come and see
That I am here, they 'll think," quoth he,
"I 'm helping this poor dying brute."

He scans the Ass from limb to limb,
And ventures now to uplift his eyes:
More steady looks the moon, and clear,
More like themselves the rocks appear,
And touch more quiet skies.

His scorn returns, — his hate revives;
He stoops the Ass's neck to seize
With malice — that again takes flight;
For in the pool a startling sight
Meets him, among the inverted trees.

Is it the moon's distorted face?
The ghost-like image of a cloud?
Is it a gallows there portrayed?
Is Peter of himself afraid?
Is it a coffin, — or a shroud?

A grisly idol hewn in stone?
Or imp from witch's lap let fall?
Perhaps a ring of shining fairies?
Such as pursue their feared vagaries
In sylvan bower, or haunted hall?

Is it a fiend that to a stake
Of fire his desperate self is tethering?
Or stubborn spirit doomed to yell
In solitary ward or cell,
Ten thousand miles from all his brethren?

Never did pulse so quickly throb,
And never heart so loudly panted;
He looks, he cannot choose but look;
Like some one reading in a book, —
A book that is enchanted.

Ah, well-a-day for Peter Bell!
He will be turned to iron soon,
Meet Statue for the court of Fear!
His hat is up, — and every hair
Bristles, and whitens in the moon!

He looks, he ponders, looks again;
He sees a motion, — hears a groan;
His eyes will burst, — his heart will break; —
He gives a loud and frightful shriek,
And back he falls, as if his life were flown!

PART SECOND.

We left our Hero in a trance,
Beneath the alders, near the river;

The Ass is by the river-side,
And, where the feeble breezes glide,
Upon the stream the moonbeams quiver.

A happy respite! but at length
He feels the glimmering of the moon;
Wakes with glazed eye, and feebly sighing, —
To sink, perhaps, where he is lying,
Into a second swoon!

He lifts his head, he sees his staff;
He touches, — 't is to him a treasure!
Faint recollection seems to tell
That he is yet where mortals dwell, —
A thought received with languid pleasure!

His head upon his elbow propped,
Becoming less and less perplexed,
Sky-ward he looks, — to rock and wood, —
And then — upon the glassy flood
His wandering eye is fixed.

Thought he, that is the face of one
In his last sleep securely bound!
So toward the stream his head he bent,
And downward thrust his staff, intent
The river's depth to sound.

Now, — like a tempest-shattered bark,
That overwhelmed and prostrate lies,

And in a moment to the verge
Is lifted of a foaming surge, —
Full suddenly the Ass doth rise:

His staring bones all shake with joy,
And close by Peter's side he stands:
While Peter o'er the river bends,
The little Ass his neck extends,
And fondly licks his hands.

Such life is in the Ass's eyes,
Such life is in his limbs and ears;
That Peter Bell, if he had been
The veriest coward ever seen,
Must now have thrown aside his fears.

The Ass looks on, — and to his work
Is Peter quietly resigned;
He touches here, — he touches there, —
And now among the dead man's hair
His sapling Peter has entwined.

He pulls — and looks — and pulls again,
And he whom the poor Ass had lost,
The man who had been four days dead,
Head-foremost from the river's bed
Uprises like a ghost!

And Peter draws him to dry land;
And through the brain of Peter pass

Some poignant twitches, fast and faster;
"No doubt," quoth he, "he is the Master
Of this poor miserable Ass!"

The meagre shadow that looks on, —
What would he now? what is he doing?
His sudden fit of joy is flown, —
He on his knees hath laid him down,
As if he were his grief renewing:

But no, — that Peter on his back
Must mount, he shows well as he can:
Thought Peter then, come weal or woe,
I'll do what he would have me do,
In pity to this poor drowned man.

With that resolve he boldly mounts
Upon the pleased and thankful Ass;
And then, without a moment's stay,
That earnest Creature turned away,
Leaving the body on the grass.

Intent upon his faithful watch,
The Beast four days and nights had past
A sweeter meadow ne'er was seen,
And there the Ass four days had been,
Nor ever once did break his fast:

Yet firm his step, and stout his heart;
The mead is crossed, the quarry's mouth

Is reached; but there the trusty guide
Into a thicket turns aside,
And deftly ambles towards the south.

When hark a burst of doleful sound!
And Peter honestly might say,
The like came never to his ears,
Though he has been, full thirty years,
A rover, night and day!

'T is not a plover of the moors,
'T is not a bittern of the fen;
Nor can it be a barking fox,
Nor night-bird chambered in the rocks,
Nor wild-cat in a woody glen!

The Ass is startled, and stops short
Right in the middle of the thicket;
And Peter, wont to whistle loud
Whether alone or in a crowd,
Is silent as a silent cricket.

What ails you now, my little Bess?
Well may you tremble and look grave
This cry, that rings along the wood,
This cry, that floats adown the flood,
Comes from the entrance of a cave:

I see a blooming Wood-boy there,
And if I had the power to say

How sorrowful the wanderer is,
Your heart would be as sad as his
Till you had kissed his tears away!

Grasping a hawthorn branch in hand,
All bright with berries ripe and red,
Into the cavern's mouth he peeps;
Thence back into the moonlight creeps;
Whom seeks he,—whom?—the silent dead

His father!—him doth he require,—
Him hath he sought, with fruitless pains,
Among the rocks, behind the trees;
Now creeping on his hands and knees,
Now running o'er the open plains.

And hither is he come at last,
When he through such a day has gone,
By this dark cave to be distrest
Like a poor bird,—her plundered nest
Hovering around with dolorous moan!

Of that intense and piercing cry
The listening Ass conjectures well;
Wild as it is, he there can read
Some intermingled notes that plead
With touches irresistible.

But Peter, when he saw the Ass
Not only stop, but turn, and change

The cherished tenor of his pace
That lamentable cry to chase, —
It wrought in him conviction strange ; —

A faith that, for the dead man's sake
And this poor slave who loved him well,
Vengeance upon his head will fall
Some visitation worse than all
Which ever till this night befell.

Meanwhile the Ass to reach his home
Is striving stoutly as he may ;
But while he climbs the woody hill,
The cry grows weak — and weaker still ;
And now at last it dies away.

So with his freight the Creature turns
Into a gloomy grove of beech,
Along the shade with footsteps true
Descending slowly, till the two
The open moonlight reach.

And there, along the narrow dell,
A fair, smooth pathway you discern,
A length of green and open road, —
As if it from a fountain flowed, —
Winding away between the fern.

The rocks that tower on either side
Build up a wild, fantastic scene ;

Temples like those among the Hindoos,
And mosques, and spires, and abbey-windows,
And castles all with ivy green!

And while the Ass pursues his way
Along this solitary dell,
As pensively his steps advance,
The mosques and spires change countenance,
And look at Peter Bell!

That unintelligible cry
Hath left him high in preparation, —
Convinced that he, or soon or late,
This very night will meet his fate, —
And so he sits in expectation!

The strenuous Animal hath clomb
With the green path; and now he wends
Where, shining like the smoothest sea,
In undisturbed immensity
A level plain extends.

But whence this faintly-rustling sound
By which the journeying pair are chased?
A withered leaf is close behind,
Light plaything for the sportive wind
Upon that solitary waste.

When Peter spied the moving thing
It only doubled his distress:

"Where there is not a bush or tree,
The very leaves they follow me, —
So huge hath been my wickedness!"

To a close lane they now are come,
Where, as before, the enduring Ass
Moves on without a moment's stop,
Nor once turns round his head to crop
A bramble-leaf or blade of grass.

Between the hedges as they go,
The white dust sleeps upon the lane;
And Peter, ever and anon
Back-looking, sees, upon a stone,
Or in the dust, a crimson stain.

A stain, — as of a drop of blood
By moonlight made more faint and wan;
Ha! why these sinkings of despair?
He knows not how the blood comes there, —
And Peter is a wicked man.

At length he spies a bleeding wound,
Where he had struck the Ass's head;
He sees the blood, knows what it is, —
A glimpse of sudden joy was his,
But then it quickly fled; —

Of him whom sudden death had seized
He thought, — of thee, O faithful Ass!

And once again those ghastly pains,
Shoot to and fro through heart and veins,
And through his brain like lightning pass.

PART THIRD.

I 've heard of one, a gentle Soul,
Though given to sadness and to gloom,
And for the fact will vouch, — one night
It chanced that by a taper's light
This man was reading in his room ;

Bending, as you or I might bend
At night o'er any pious book,
When sudden blackness overspread
The snow-white page on which he read,
And made the good man round him look.

The chamber walls were dark all round, —
And to his book he turned again ; —
The light had left the lonely taper,
And formed itself upon the paper
Into large letters, bright and plain !

The goodly book was in his hand, —
And, on the page, more black than coal,
Appeared, set forth in strange array,
A *word*, — which to his dying day
Perplexed the good man's gentle soul.

The ghostly word, thus plainly seen,
Did never from his lips depart;
But he hath said, poor gentle wight!
It brought full many a sin to light
Out of the bottom of his heart.

Dread Spirits! to confound the meek
Why wander from your course so far,
Disordering color, form, and stature!
— Let good men feel the soul of nature,
And see things as they are.

Yet, potent Spirits! well I know
How ye, that play with soul and sense,
Are not unused to trouble friends
Of goodness, for most gracious ends, —
And this I speak in reverence!

But might I give advice to you,
Whom in my fear I love so well;
From men of pensive virtue go,
Dread Beings! and your empire show
On hearts like that of Peter Bell.

Your presence often have I felt
In darkness and the stormy night;
And, with like force, if need there be,
Ye can put forth your agency
When earth is calm, and heaven is bright.

Then, coming from the wayward world,
That powerful world in which ye dwell,
Come, Spirits of the Mind! and try,
To-night, beneath the moonlight sky,
What may be done with Peter Bell!

— O, would that some more skilful voice
My further labor might prevent!
Kind Listeners, that around me sit,
I feel that I am all unfit
For such high argument.

I've played, I've danced, with my narration
I loitered long ere I began:
Ye waited then on my good pleasure;
Pour out indulgence still, in measure
As liberal as ye can!

Our Travellers, ye remember well,
Are thridding a sequestered lane;
And Peter many tricks is trying,
And many anodynes applying,
To ease his conscience of its pain.

By this his heart is lighter far;
And, finding that he can account
So snugly for that crimson stain,
His evil spirit up again
Does like an empty bucket mount.

And Peter is a deep logician
Who hath no lack of wit mercurial;
"Blood drops, leaves rustle, yet," quoth he,
"This poor man never, but for me,
Could have had Christian burial.

"And, say the best you can, 't is plain,
That here has been some wicked dealing:
No doubt the Devil in me wrought;
I 'm not the man who could have thought
An Ass like this was worth the stealing!"

So from his pocket Peter takes
His shining horn tobacco-box;
And, in a light and careless way,
As men who with their purpose play,
Upon the lid he knocks.

Let them whose voice can stop the clouds,
Whose cunning eye can see the wind,
Tell to a curious world the cause
Why, making here a sudden pause,
The Ass turned round his head, and *grinned*.

Appalling process! I have marked
The like on heath, in lonely wood;
And, verily, have seldom met
A spectacle more hideous, — yet
It suited Peter's present mood.

And, grinning in his turn, his teeth
He in jocose defiance showed, —
When, to upset his spiteful mirth,
A murmur, pent within the earth,
In the dead earth beneath the road,

Rolled audibly! it swept along,
A muffled noise, — a rumbling sound! —
'T was by a troop of miners made,
Plying with gunpowder their trade,
Some twenty fathoms underground.

Small cause of dire effect! for, surely,
If ever mortal, King or Cotter,
Believed that earth was charged to quake
And yawn for his unworthy sake,
'T was Peter Bell the Potter.

But, as an oak in breathless air
Will stand though to the centre hewn;
Or as the weakest things, if frost
Have stiffened them, maintain their post;
So he, beneath the gazing moon! —

The Beast bestriding thus, he reached
A spot where, in a sheltering cove,
A little chapel stands alone,
With greenest ivy overgrown,
And tufted with an ivy grove;

Dying insensibly away
From human thoughts and purposes,
It seemed — wall, window, roof, and tower —
To bow to some transforming power,
And blend with the surrounding trees.

As ruinous a place it was,
Thought Peter, in the shire of Fife
That served my turn, when, following still
From land to land a reckless will,
I married my sixth wife!

The unheeding Ass moves slowly on,
And now is passing by an inn
Brimfull of a carousing crew,
That make, with curses not a few,
An uproar and a drunken din.

I cannot well express the thoughts
Which Peter in those noises found; —
A stifling power compressed his frame,
While-as a swimming darkness came
Over that dull and dreary sound.

For well did Peter know the sound;
The language of those drunken joys
To him, a jovial soul, I ween,
But a few hours ago had been
A gladsome and a welcome noise.

Now turned adrift into the past,
He finds no solace in his course;
Like planet-stricken men of yore,
He trembles, smitten to the core
By strong compunction and remorse.

But, more than all, his heart is stung
To think of one, almost a child;
A sweet and playful Highland girl,
As light and beauteous as a squirrel,
As beauteous and as wild!

Her dwelling was a lonely house,
A cottage in a heathy dell;
And she put on her gown of green,
And left her mother at sixteen,
And followed Peter Bell.

But many good and pious thoughts
Had she; and, in the kirk to pray,
Two long Scotch miles, through rain or snow,
To kirk she had been used to go,
Twice every Sabbath day.

And when she followed Peter Bell,
It was to lead an honest life;
For he, with tongue not used to falter,
Had pledged his troth before the altar
To love her as his wedded wife.

A mother's hope is hers; — but soon
She drooped and pined like one forlorn;
From Scriptures she a name did borrow;
Benoni, or the child of sorrow,
She called her babe unborn.

For she had learned how Peter lived,
And took it in most grievous part;
She to the very bone was worn,
And, ere that little child was born,
Died of a broken heart.

And now the Spirits of the Mind
Are busy with poor Peter Bell;
Upon the rights of visual sense
Usurping, with a prevalence
More terrible than magic spell.

Close by a brake of flowering furze
(Above it shivering aspens play)
He sees an unsubstantial creature,
His very self in form and feature,
Not four yards from the broad highway:

And stretched beneath the furze he sees
The Highland girl,— it is no other;
And hears her crying as she cried,
The very moment that she died,
"My mother! O my mother!"

The sweat pours down from Peter's face,
So grievous is his heart's contrition;
With agony his eyeballs ache
While he beholds by the furze-brake
This miserable vision!

Calm is the well-deserving brute,
His peace hath no offence betrayed;
But now, while down that slope he wends,
A voice to Peter's ear ascends,
Resounding from the woody glade:

The voice, though clamorous as a horn
Re-echoed by a naked rock,
Comes from that tabernacle. — List!
Within, a fervent Methodist
Is preaching to no heedless flock!

"Repent! repent!" he cries aloud,
"While yet ye may find mercy; — strive
To love the Lord with all your might;
Turn to him, seek him day and night,
And save your souls alive!

"Repent! repent! though ye have gone,
Through paths of wickedness and woe,
After the Babylonian harlot;
And, though your sins be red as scarlet,
They shall be white as snow!"

Even as he passed the door, these words
Did plainly come to Peter's ears;
And they such joyful tidings were,
The joy was more than he could bear! —
He melted into tears.

Sweet tears of hope and tenderness!
And fast they fell, a plenteous shower!
His nerves, his sinews, seemed to melt;
Through all his iron frame was felt
A gentle, a relaxing power!

Each fibre of his frame was weak;
Weak all the animal within;
But, in its helplessness, grew mild
And gentle as an infant child,
An infant that has known no sin.

'T is said, meek Beast! that, thro' Heaven's grace
He not unmoved did notice now
The cross upon thy shoulder scored,
For lasting impress, by the Lord
To whom all human-kind shall bow;

Memorial of his touch, that day
When Jesus humbly deigned to ride,
Entering the proud Jerusalem,
By an immeasurable stream
Of shouting people deified!

Meanwhile the persevering Ass
Turned towards a gate that hung in view
Across a shady lane; his chest
Against the yielding gate he pressed,
And quietly passed through.

And up the stony lane he goes;
No ghost more softly ever trod;
Among the stones and pebbles, he
Sets down his hoofs inaudibly,
As if with felt his hoofs were shod.

Along the lane the trusty Ass
Went twice two hundred yards or more,
And no one could have guessed his aim, —
Till to a lonely house he came,
And stopped beside the door.

Thought Peter, 't is the poor Man's home
He listens, — not a sound is heard,
Save from the trickling household rill;
But, stepping o'er the cottage-sill,
Forthwith a little Girl appeared.

She to the Meeting-house was bound,
In hopes some tidings there to gather:
No glimpse it is, no doubtful gleam;
She saw, — and uttered with a scream,
"My father! here 's my father!"

The very word was plainly heard,
Heard plainly by the wretched Mother; —
Her joy was like a deep affright:
And forth she rushed into the light,
And saw it was another!

And, instantly, upon the earth,
Beneath the full moon shining bright,
Close to the Ass's feet she fell;
At the same moment Peter Bell
Dismounts in most unhappy plight.

As he beheld the Woman lie
Breathless and motionless, the mind
Of Peter sadly was confused;
But, though to such demands unused,
And helpless almost as the blind,

He raised her up; and, while he held
Her body propped against his knee,
The Woman waked, — and when she spied
The poor Ass standing by her side,
She moaned most bitterly.

"O God be praised! — my heart 's at ease, —
For he is dead, — I know it well!"
— At this she wept a bitter flood;
And, in the best way that he could,
His tale did Peter tell.

He trembles, — he is pale as death;
His voice is weak with perturbation;
He turns aside his head, he pauses:
Poor Peter from a thousand causes
Is crippled sore in his narration.

At length she learned how he espied
The Ass in that small meadow-ground;
And that her Husband now lay dead,
Beside that luckless river's bed
In which he had been drowned.

A piercing look the Widow cast
Upon the Beast that near her stands;
She sees 't is he, that 't is the same;
She calls the poor Ass by his name,
And wrings, and wrings her hands.

"O wretched loss! — untimely stroke!
If he had died upon his bed!
He knew not one forewarning pain
He never will come home again, —
Is dead, for ever dead!"

Beside the Woman Peter stands;
His heart is opening more and more;
A holy sense pervades his mind;
He feels what he for human-kind
Had never felt before.

At length, by Peter's arm sustained,
The Woman rises from the ground:
"O mercy! something must be done!
My little Rachel, you must run, —
Some willing neighbor must be found.

"Make haste, my little Rachel, do,
The first you meet with, bid him come;
Ask him to lend his horse to night,
And this good Man, whom Heaven requite,
Will help to bring the body home."

Away goes Rachel weeping loud; —
An Infant, waked by her distress,
Makes in the house a piteous cry;
And Peter hears the Mother sigh,
"Seven are they, and all fatherless!"

And now is Peter taught to feel
That man's heart is a holy thing;
And Nature, through a world of death,
Breathes into him a second breath,
More searching than the breath of Spring

Upon a stone the Woman sits
In agony of silent grief, —
From his own thoughts did Peter start;
He longs to press her to his heart,
From love that cannot find relief.

But roused, as if through every limb
Had passed a sudden shock of dread,
The Mother o'er the threshold flies,
And up the cottage stairs she hies,
And on the pillow lays her burning head.

And Peter turns his steps aside
Into a shade of darksome trees,
Where he sits down, he knows not how,
With his hands pressed against his brow,
His elbows on his tremulous knees.

There, self-involved, does Peter sit
Until no sign of life he makes,
As if his mind were sinking deep
Through years that have been long asleep!
The trance is passed away, — he wakes:

He lifts his head, and sees the Ass
Yet standing in the clear moonshine:
"When shall I be as good as thou?
O would, poor beast, that I had now
A heart but half as good as thine!"

But *He*, who deviously hath sought
His Father through the lonesome woods,
Hath sought, proclaiming to the ear
Of night his grief and sorrowful fear, —
He comes, escaped from fields and floods; —

With weary pace is drawing nigh;
He sees the Ass, — and nothing living
Had ever such a fit of joy
As hath this little orphan Boy,
For he has no misgiving!

Forth to the gentle Ass he springs,
And up about his neck he climbs;
In loving words he talks to him,
He kisses, kisses face and limb, —
He kisses him a thousand times!

This Peter sees, while in the shade
He stood beside the cottage door;
And Peter Bell, the ruffian wild,
Sobs loud, he sobs even like a child,
"O God, I can endure no more!"

Here ends my Tale: for in a trice
Arrived a neighbor with his horse;
Peter went forth with him straightway
And, with due care, ere break of day,
Together they brought back the Corse.

And many years did this poor Ass,
Whom once it was my luck to see
Cropping the shrubs of Leming Lane,
Help by his labor to maintain
The Widow and her family.

And Peter Bell, who till that night
Had been the wildest of his clan,
Forsook his crimes, renounced his folly,
And, after ten months' melancholy,
became a good and honest man.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

DEDICATION.

TO ——.

HAPPY the feeling from the bosom thrown
In perfect shape, (whose beauty Time shall spare
Though a breath made it,) like a bubble blown
For summer pastime into wanton air;
Happy the thought best likened to a stone
Of the sea-beach, when, polished with nice care,
Veins it discovers exquisite and rare,
Which for the loss of that moist gleam atone
That tempted first to gather it. That here,
O chief of Friends! such feelings I present
To thy regard, with thoughts so fortunate,
Were a vain notion; but the hope is dear,
That thou, if not with partial joy elate,
Wilt smile upon this gift with more than mild content

PART I.

I.

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,

High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 't was pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

II.

ADMONITION.

Intended more particularly for the perusal of those who may have happened to be enamored of some beautiful place of retreat, in the Country of the Lakes.

WELL mayst thou halt, and gaze with brightening eye!
The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode; — forbear to sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders, who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.
Think what the Home must be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants! — Roof, window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:

Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched, would melt away.

III.

"BELOVED VALE!" I said, "when I shall con
Those many records of my childish years,
Remembrance of myself and of my peers
Will press me down: to think of what is gone
Will be an awful thought, if life have one."
But when into the Vale I came, no fears
Distressed me; from mine eyes escaped no tears;
Deep thought, or dread remembrance, had I none
By doubts and thousand petty fancies crost
I stood, of simple shame the blushing Thrall;
So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields so small
A Juggler's balls old Time about him tossed;
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed;
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

IV.

AT APPLETHWAITE, NEAR KESWICK.

1804.

BEAUMONT! it was thy wish that I should rear
A seemly Cottage in this sunny Dell,
On favored ground, thy gift, where I might dwell
In neighborhood with One to me most dear,
That undivided we from year to year
Might work in our high Calling, — a bright hope

To which our fancies, mingling, gave free scope
Till checked by some necessities severe.
And should these slacken, honored BEAUMONT still
Even then we may perhaps in vain implore
Leave of our fate thy wishes to fulfil.
Whether this boon be granted us or not,
Old Skiddaw will look down upon the Spot
With pride, the Muses love it evermore.

V.

1801.

PELION and Ossa flourish side by side,
Together in immortal books enrolled:
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold
And that inspiring Hill, which "did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,"
Shines with poetic radiance as of old;
While not an English Mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds
What was the great Parnassus' self to Thee,
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
Our British Hill is nobler far; he shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly

VI.

THERE is a little unpretending Rill
Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
That ever among Men or Naiads sought
Notice or name! — It quivers down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will;
Yet to my mind this scanty stream is brought
Oftener than Ganges or the Nile; a thought
Of private recollection sweet and still!
Months perish with their moons; year treads on year;
But, faithful Emma! thou with me canst say,
That, while ten thousand pleasures disappear,
And flies their memory fast almost as they,
The immortal Spirit of one happy day
Lingers beside that Rill, in vision clear.

VII.

HER only pilot the soft breeze, the boat
Lingers, but Fancy is well satisfied;
With keen-eyed Hope, with Memory, at her side,
And the glad Muse at liberty to note
All that to each is precious, as we float
Gently along; regardless who shall chide
If the heavens smile, and leave us free to glide,
Happy Associates, breathing air remote
From trivial cares. But, Fancy and the Muse,
Why have I crowded this small bark with you

And others of your kind, ideal crew!
While here sits One whose brightness owes its hues
To flesh and blood; no Goddess from above,
No fleeting Spirit, but my own true Love?

VIII.

THE fairest, brightest hues of ether fade;
The sweetest notes must terminate and die;
O Friend! thy flute has breathed a harmony
Softly resounded through this rocky glade;
Such strains of rapture as* the Genius played
In his still haunt on Bagdad's summit high;
He who stood visible to Mirza's eye,
Never before to human sight betrayed.
Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread!
The visionary Arches are not there,
Nor the green Islands, nor the shining Seas;
Yet sacred is to me this Mountain's head,
Whence I have risen, uplifted on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.

IX.

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE,

Painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart.

PRAISED be the Art whose subtle power could stay
Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;

* See the Vision of Mirza in the Spectator.

Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their way
Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
And showed the Bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.
Soul-soothing Art! whom Morning, Noontide, Even,
Do serve with all their changeful pageantry;
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

X.

"WHY, Minstrel, these untuneful murmurings, —
Dull, flagging notes that with each other jar?"
"Think, gentle Lady, of a Harp so far
From its own country, and forgive the strings."
A simple answer! but even so forth springs,
From the Castalian fountains of the heart,
The Poetry of Life, and all *that* Art
Divine of words quickening insensate things.
From the submissive necks of guiltless men
Stretched on the block, the glittering axe recoils;
Sun, moon, and stars, all struggle in the toils
Of mortal sympathy; what wonder then
That the poor Harp distempered music yields
To its sad Lord, far from his native fields?

XI.

AERIAL ROCK, — whose solitary brow
From this low threshold daily meets my sight,
When I step forth to hail the morning light,
Or quit the stars with a lingering farewell, — how
Shall Fancy pay to thee a grateful vow?
How, with the Muse's aid, her love attest?
— By planting on thy naked head the crest
Of an imperial Castle, which the plough
Of ruin shall not touch. Innocent scheme!
That doth presume no more than to supply
A grace the sinuous vale and roaring stream
Want, through neglect of hoar Antiquity.
Rise, then, ye votive Towers! and catch a gleam
Of golden sunset, ere it fade and die.

XII.

TO SLEEP.

O GENTLE SLEEP! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding Dove,
A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
A Fly, that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above,
Now on the water vexed with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience, no;

Hence am I cross and peevish as a child:
Am pleased by fits to have thee for my foe
Yet ever willing to be reconciled:
O gentle Creature! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled.

XIII.

TO SLEEP.

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names
The very sweetest Fancy culls or frames,
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep!
Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering; Balm that tames
All anguish; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which flesh is crost?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most!

XIV.

TO SLEEP.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees

Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet to lie
Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth;
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

XV.

THE WILD DUCK'S NEST.

The imperial Consort of the Fairy-king
Owns not a sylvan bower; or gorgeous cell
With emerald floored, and with purpureal shell
Ceilinged and roofed; that is so fair a thing
As this low structure, for the tasks of Spring
Prepared by one who loves the buoyant swell
Of the brisk waves, yet here consents to dwell,
And spreads in steadfast peace her brooding wing.
Words cannot paint the o'ershadowing yew-tree bough,
And dimly-gleaming Nest, — a hollow crown
Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
Fine as the mother's softest plumes allow:

I gazed, — and, self-accused while gazing, sighed
For human-kind, weak slaves of cumbrous pride

XVI.

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN "THE COMPLETE ANGLER."

While flowing rivers yield a blameless sport
Shall live the name of Walton: Sage benign!
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and line
Unfolding, did not fruitless exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.
Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline,
He found the longest summer day too short,
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford Brook.
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet Book,
The cowslip-bank and shady willow-tree;
And the fresh meads, where flowed, from every nook
Of his full bosom, gladsome Piety!

XVII.

TO THE POET, JOHN DYER.

Bard of the Fleece, whose skilful genius made
That work a living landscape fair and bright;
Nor hallowed less with musical delight

Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood strayed,
Those southern tracts of Cambia, "deep embayed,
With green hills fenced, with ocean's murmur lulled";
Though hasty Fame hath many a chaplet culled
For worthless brows, while in the pensive shade
Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced,
Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
A grateful few, shall love thy modest Lay,
Long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aërial waste;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill!

XVIII.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED THE PUBLICATION OF A CERTAIN POEM.

See Milton's Sonnet, beginning, "A Book was writ of late called 'Tetrachordon.'"

A Book came forth of late, called Peter Bell
Not negligent the style; — the matter? — good
As aught that song records of Robin Hood;
Or Roy, renowned through many a Scottish dell
But some (who brook those hackneyed themes full well,
Nor heat, at Tam O'Shanter's name, their blood)
Waxed wroth, and with foul claws, a harpy brood,
On Bard and Hero clamorously fell.
Heed not, wild Rover once through heath and glen

Who mad'st at length the better life thy choice,
Heed not such onset! nay, if praise of men
To thee appear not an unmeaning voice,
Lift up that gray-haired forehead, and rejoice
In the just tribute of thy Poet's pen!

XIX.

Grief, thou hast lost an ever ready friend
Now that the cottage Spinning-wheel is mute;
And Care, a comforter that best could suit
Her froward mood, and softliest reprehend;
And Love, a charmer's voice, that used to lend,
More efficaciously than aught that flows
From harp or lute, kind influence to compose
The throbbing pulse, — else troubled without end
Even Joy could tell, Joy craving truce and rest
From her own overflow, what power sedate
On those revolving motions did await
Assiduously, to soothe her aching breast;
And, to a point of just relief, abate
The mantling triumphs of a day too blest.

XX.

TO S. H.

Excuse is needless when with love sincere
Of occupation, not by fashion led,
Thou turn'st the Wheel that slept with dust o'er
spread;

My nerves from no such murmur shrink, though near,
Soft as the Dorhawk's to a distant ear,
When twilight shades darken the mountain's head.
Even She who toils to spin our vital thread
Might smile on work, O Lady, once so dear
To household virtues. Venerable Art,
Torn from the Poor! yet shall kind Heaven protect
Its own; though Rulers, with undue respect,
Trusting to crowded factory and mart
And proud discoveries of the intellect,
Heed not the pillage of man's ancient heart.

XXI.

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE VALLEYS OF WESTMORELAND, ON EASTER SUNDAY

With each recurrence of this glorious morn
That saw the Saviour in his human frame
Rise from the dead, erewhile the Cottage-dame
Put on fresh raiment,—till that hour unworn:
Domestic hands the home-bred wool had shorn,
And she who span it culled the daintiest fleece,
In thoughtful reverence to the Prince of Peace,
Whose temples bled beneath the platted thorn.
A blest estate when piety sublime
These humble props disdained not! O green dales
Sad may *I* be who heard your Sabbath chime
When Art's abused inventions were unknown;
Kind Nature's various wealth was all your own;
And benefits were weighed in Reason's scales!

XXII.

DECAY OF PIETY.

Oft have I seen, ere Time had ploughed my cheek,
Matrons and Sires, who, punctual to the call
Of their loved Church, on fast or festival
Through the long year the House of Prayer would seek:
By Christmas snows, by visitation bleak
Of Easter winds, unscared, from hut or hall
They came to lowly bench or sculptured stall,
But with one fervor of devotion meek.
I see the places where they once were known,
And ask, surrounded even by kneeling crowds,
Is ancient Piety for ever flown?
Alas! even then they seemed like fleecy clouds
That, struggling through the western sky, have won
Their pensive light from a departed sun!

XXIII.

COMPOSED ON THE EVE OF THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND IN THE VALE OF GRASMERE, 1812.

What need of clamorous bells, or ribbons gay,
These humble nuptials to proclaim or grace?
Angels of love, look down upon the place;
Shed on the chosen vale a sun-bright day!
Yet no proud gladness would the Bride display
Even for such promise: — serious is her face,

Modest her mien; and she, whose thoughts keep
pace
With gentleness, in that becoming way
Will thank you. Faultless does the Maid appear;
No disproportion in her soul, no strife:
But when the closer view of wedded life
Hath shown that nothing human can be clear
From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
To her indulgent lord become more dear.

XXIV.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO.

I.

Yes! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed;
For if of our affections none finds grace
In sight of Heaven, then wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour;
But in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

XXV.

FROM THE SAME.

II.

No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my Soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold:
Heaven-born, the Soul a heavenward course must hold;
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal Form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes: nor will he lend
His heart to aught that doth on time depend.
'T is sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
That kills the soul: love betters what is best,
Even here below, but more in heaven above.

XXVI.

FROM THE SAME. TO THE SUPREME BEING.

III.

THE prayers I make will then be sweet indeed
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
That of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
That quickens only where Thou say'st it may

Unless Thou show to us thine own true way
No man can find it; Father! Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of thee,
And sound thy praises everlastingly.

XXVII.

Surprised by joy, impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport — oh! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind, —
But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss! — That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn,
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

XXVIII.

I.

METHOUGHT I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapors from mine eyes did shroud,
Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
Ever put on; a miserable crowd,
Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
"Thou art our king, O Death! to thee we groan."
Those steps I clomb; the mists before me gave
Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
With her face up to heaven; that seemed to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!

XXIX.

NOVEMBER, 1836.

II.

EVEN so for me a Vision sanctified
The sway of Death; long ere mine eyes had seen
Thy countenance,—the still rapture of thy mien,—
When thou, dear Sister! wert become Death's Bride:
No trace of pain or languor could abide

That change: — age on thy brow was smoothed, — thy cold,
Wan cheek at once was privileged to unfold
A loveliness to living youth denied.
Oh! if within me hope should e'er decline,
The lamp of faith, lost Friend! too faintly burn;
Then may that heaven-revealing smile of thine,
The bright assurance, visibly return:
And let my spirit in thy power divine
Rejoice, as, through that power, it ceased to mourn.

XXX.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea.
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine
God being with thee when we know it not.

XXXI.

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snows?
What boots the inquiry? — Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may,
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters,) doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

XXXII.

WITH Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why
A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This Ship was naught to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;
This Ship to all the rest did I prefer:

When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
No tarrying; where she comes the winds must stir:
Or went she, and due north her journey took.

XXXIII.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. — Great God! I 'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

XXXIV.

A volant Tribe of Bards on earth are found,
Who, while the flattering Zephyrs round them play
On "coignes of vantage" hang their nests of clay;
How quickly from that aery hold unbound,
Dust for oblivion! To the solid ground
Of nature trusts the Mind that builds for aye;
Convinced that there, there only, she can lay

Secure foundations. As the year runs round,
Apart she toils within the chosen ring;
While the stars shine, or while day's purple eye
Is gently closing with the flowers of Spring;
Where even the motion of an Angel's wing
Would interrupt the intense tranquillity
Of silent hills, and more than silent sky.

XXXV.

"WEAK is the will of Man, his judgment blind;
Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;
Heavy is woe; — and joy, for human-kind,
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!"
Thus might *he* paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
And color life's dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined:
'T is hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of Faith, and round the Sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

XXXVI.

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT.

CALVERT! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee

Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem, —
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where'er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse's diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate; —
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

PART II.

I.

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honors; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glowworm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand

The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains, — alas! too few.

II.

How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood
An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbors, and ground-flowers in flocks;
And wild-rose tiptoe upon hawthorn stocks,
Like a bold Girl, who plays her agile pranks
At Wakes and Fairs with wandering Mountebanks, —
When she stands cresting the Clown's head, and mocks
The crowd beneath her. Verily I think
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
Or map of the whole world: thoughts, link by link,
Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
And leap at once from the delicious stream.

III.

TO B. R. HAYDON.

High is our calling, Friend! — Creative Art,
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,)

Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Heroically fashioned —— to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness, —
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

IV.

From the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, Gillies, rise: the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a wingèd steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a rich guerdon waits on minds that dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,
And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heavenward they direct. — Then droop
not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell 'mid Roslin's faded grove:
A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

V.

Fair Prime of life! were it enough to gild
With ready sunbeams every straggling shower,
And, if an unexpected cloud should lower,
Swiftly thereon a rainbow arch to build
For Fancy's errands, — then, from fields half-tilled
Gathering green weeds to mix with poppy-flower
Thee might thy Minions crown, and chant thy power,
Unpitied by the wise, all censure stilled.
Ah! show that worthier honors are thy due;
Fair Prime of Life! arouse the deeper heart;
Confirm the Spirit glorying to pursue
Some path of steep ascent and lofty aim;
And, if there be a joy that slights the claim
Of grateful memory, bid that joy depart.

VI.

I watch, and long have watched, with calm regret
Yon slowly sinking star, — immortal Sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering choir!
Blue ether still surrounds him — yet — and yet;
But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns, — transmuted to a dusty fire, —
Then pays submissively the appointed debt
To the flying moments, and is seen no more.

Angels and gods! We struggle with our fate,
While health, power, glory, from their height
decline,
Depressed; and then extinguished: and our state,
In this, how different, lost Star, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams restore!

VII.

I HEARD (alas! 't was only in a dream)
Strains, — which, as sage Antiquity believed,
By waking ears have sometimes been received
Wafted adown the wind from lake or stream;
A most melodious requiem, a supreme
And perfect harmony of notes, achieved
By a fair Swan on drowsy billows heaved,
O'er which her pinions shed a silver gleam.
For is she not the votary of Apollo?
And knows she not, singing as he inspires,
That bliss awaits her which the ungenial Hollow *
Of the dull earth partakes not, nor desires?
Mount, tuneful Bird, and join the immortal choirs!
She soared, and I awoke, struggling in vain to
follow.

* See the Phædon of Plato, by which this Sonnet was suggested.

VIII.

RETIREMENT.

If the whole weight of what we think and feel,
Save only far as thought and feeling blend
With action, were as nothing, patriot Friend!
From thy remonstrance would be no appeal;
But to promote and fortify the weal
Of her own Being is her paramount end;
A truth which they alone shall comprehend
Who shun the mischief which they cannot heal.
Peace in these feverish times is sovereign bliss:
Here, with no thirst but what the stream can slake,
And startled only by the rustling brake,
Cool air I breathe; while the unencumbered Mind
By some weak aims at services assigned
To gentle Natures, thanks not Heaven amiss.

IX.

Not Love, not War, nor the tumultuous swell
Of civil conflict, nor the wrecks of change,
Nor Duty struggling with afflictions strange, —
Not these *alone* inspire the tuneful shell;
But where untroubled peace and concord dwell,
There also is the Muse not loth to range,
Watching the twilight smoke of cot or grange,
Skyward ascending from a woody dell.
Meek aspirations please her, lone endeavor,

And sage content, and placid melancholy;
She loves to gaze upon a crystal river, —
Diaphanous because it travels slowly;
Soft is the music that would charm for ever;
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.

X.

Mark the concentred hazels that inclose
Yon old gray Stone, protected from the ray
Of noontide suns: — and even the beams that play
And glance, while wantonly the rough wind blows,
Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof, amid embowering gloom,
The very image framing of a Tomb,
In which some ancient Chieftain finds repose
Among the lonely mountains. — Live, ye trees!
And thou, gray Stone, the pensive likeness keep
Of a dark chamber where the Mighty sleep:
For more than Fancy to the influence bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time's forlorn humanities.

XI.

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HAMBLETON HILLS, YORKSHIRE.

Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell;
The wished-for point was reached; but at an hour
When little could be gained from that rich dower

Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.
Yet did the glowing west with marvellous power
Salute us; there stood Indian citadel,
Temple of Greece, and minster with its tower
Substantially expressed, — a place for bell
Or clock to toll from! Many a tempting isle,
With groves that never were imagined, lay
'Mid seas how steadfast! objects all for the eye
Of silent rapture; but we felt the while
We should forget them; they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.

XII.

——— "they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away."

THOSE words were uttered as in pensive mood
We turned, departing from that solemn sight:
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily wooed!
But now upon this thought I cannot brood;
It is unstable as a dream of night;
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
Though clad in colors beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.

XIII.

SEPTEMBER, 1815.

WHILE not a leaf seems faded; while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask; this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scymitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware;
And whispers to the silent birds, "Prepare
Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields."
For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature's tuneful choir, this rustling dry
Through leaves yet green, and yon crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
'Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song,
And nobler cares than listless summer knew.

XIV.

NOVEMBER 1.

HOW clear, how keen, how marvellously bright,
The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
Which, strewn with snow smooth as the sky can shed,
Shines like another sun, — on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,

If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head,—
Terrestrial, but a surface by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing
Unswept, unstained? Nor shall the aërial Powers
Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Has filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers

XV.

COMPOSED DURING A STORM.

One who was suffering tumult in his soul,
Yet failed to seek the sure relief of prayer,
Went forth, his course surrendering to the care
Of the fierce wind, while midday lightnings prowl
Insidiously, untimely thunders growl;
While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers, tear
The lingering remnants of their yellow hair,
And shivering wolves, surprised with darkness, howl
As if the sun were not. He raised his eye
Soul-smitten; for, that instant, did appear
Large space ('mid dreadful clouds) of purest sky
An azure disc,— shield of tranquillity;
Invisible, unlooked-for minister
Of providential goodness ever nigh!

XVI.

TO A SNOWDROP.

LONE Flower, hemmed in with snows and white
as they
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odors lavishing
On the soft West-wind and his frolic peers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger of Spring
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

XVII.

TO THE LADY MARY LOWTHER.

With a selection from the Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea; and extracts of similar character from other Writers transcribed by a female friend.

LADY! I rifled a Parnassian Cave
(But seldom trod) of mildly gleaming ore:
And culled, from sundry beds, a lucid store
Of genuine crystals, pure as those that pave

The azure brooks, where Dian joys to lave
Her spotless limbs; and ventured to explore
Dim shades — for relics, upon Lethe's shore,
Cast up at random by the sullen wave.
To female hands the treasures were resigned;
And lo this Work! — a grotto bright and clear
From stain or taint; in which thy blameless mind
May feed on thoughts though pensive not austere
Or, if thy deeper spirit be inclined
To holy musing, it may enter here.

XVIII.

TO LADY BEAUMONT.

Lady! the songs of Spring were in the grove
While I was shaping beds for winter flowers;
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs, — to hang upon the warm alcove,
And sheltering wall; and still, as Fancy wove
The dream, to time and nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, Lady! which your feet shall rove.
Yes! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of Spring.

XIX.

There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only Poets know;—'t was rightly said;
Whom could the Muses else allure to tread
Their smoothest paths, to wear their lightest chains?
When happiest Fancy has inspired the strains,
How oft the malice of one luckless word
Pursues the Enthusiast to the social board,
Haunts him belated on the silent plains!
Yet he repines not, if his thought stand clear,
At last, of hindrance and obscurity,
Fresh as the star that crowns the brow of morn;
Bright, speckless, as a softly moulded tear
The moment it has left the virgin's eye,
Or rain-drop lingering on the pointed thorn.

XX.

The Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said,
"Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art bright!"
Forthwith, that little cloud, in ether spread
And penetrated all with tender light,
She cast away, and showed her fulgent head
Uncovered; dazzling the beholder's sight
As if to vindicate her beauty's right,
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparagèd.
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went floating from her, darkening as it went;
And a huge mass to bury or to hide,

Approached this glory of the firmament;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured, — content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

XXI.

When haughty expectations prostrate lie,
And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing,
Oft shall the lowly weak, till nature bring
Mature release, in fair society
Survive, and Fortune's utmost anger try;
Like these frail snowdrops that together cling,
And nod their helmets, smitten by the wing
Of many a furious whirl-blast sweeping by.
Observe the faithful flowers! if small to great
May lead the thoughts, thus struggling used to stand
The Emathian phalanx, nobly obstinate;
And so the bright immortal Theban band,
Whom onset fiercely urged at Jove's command
Might overwhelm, but could not separate!

XXII.

Hail, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!
Not dull art thou as undiscerning Night;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions. — Ancient Power!
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest

On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was seen
The selfsame Vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power! brought forth;
These mighty barriers, and the gulf between,
The flood, the stars, — a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth!

XXIII.

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,
"How silently, and with how wan a face!"
Where art thou? Thou so often seen on high
Running among the clouds a Wood-nymph's race!
Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath 's a sight
Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!
The Northern Wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle-horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be:
And all the stars, fast as the clouds were riven,
Should sally forth, to keep thee company,
Hurrying and sparkling through the clear blue heaven;
But, Cynthia! should to thee the palm be given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

XXIV.

EVEN as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimming sleep, or as a lamp
Suddenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon Taper 'mid a black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless:
The lake below reflects it not; the sky,
Muffled in clouds, affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet, round the body of that joyless Thing,
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
A gay society with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing; — or they sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

XXV.

THE stars are mansions built by Nature's hand,
And, haply, there the spirits of the blest
Dwell, clothed in radiance, their immortal vest
Huge Ocean shows, within his yellow strand,
A habitation marvellously planned,
For life to occupy in love and rest;
All that we see is dome, or vault, or nest,
Or fortress, reared at Nature's sage command.
Glad thought for every season! but the Spring
Gave it while cares were weighing on my heart,

Mid song of birds, and insects murmuring;
And while the youthful year's prolific art —
Of bud, leaf, blade, and flower — was fashioning
Abodes where self-disturbance hath no part.

XXVI.

Desponding Father! mark this altered bough,
So beautiful of late, with sunshine warmed,
Or moist with dews; what more unsightly now,
Its blossoms shrivelled, and its fruit, if formed,
Invisible? yet Spring her genial brow
Knits not o'er that discoloring and decay
As false to expectation. Nor fret thou
At like unlovely process in the May
Of human life: a Stripling's graces blow,
Fade, and are shed, that from their timely fall
(Misdeem it not a cankerous change) may grow
Rich mellow bearings, that for thanks shall call:
In all men, sinful is it to be slow
To hope, — in Parents, sinful above all.

XXVII.

CAPTIVITY. — MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

As the cold aspect of a sunless way
Strikes through the Traveller's frame with deadlier
chill,
Oft as appears a grove, or obvious hill,

Glistening with unparticipated ray,
Or shining slope where he must never stray;
So joys, remembered without wish or will,
Sharpen the keenest edge of present ill, —
On the crushed heart a heavier burden lay.
Just Heaven, contract the compass of my mind
To fit proportion with my altered state!
Quench those felicities whose light I find
Reflected in my bosom all too late! —
O be my spirit, like my thraldom, strait;
And, like mine eyes that stream with sorrow, blind!"

XXVIII.

ST. CATHERINE OF LEDBURY.

When human touch (as monkish books attest)
Nor was applied nor could be, Ledbury bells
Broke forth in concert flung adown the dells,
And upward, high as Malvern's cloudy crest;
Sweet tones, and caught by a noble lady blest
To rapture! Mabel listened at the side
Of her loved mistress: soon the music died,
And Catherine said, Here I set up my rest.
Warned in a dream, the Wanderer long had sought
A home that by such miracle of sound
Must be revealed: — she heard it now, or felt
The deep, deep joy of a confiding thought;
And there, a saintly Anchoress, she dwelt
Till she exchanged for heaven that happy ground.

XXIX.

——"gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

THOUGH narrow be that old Man's cares, and near,
The poor old Man is greater than he seems:
For he hath waking empire, wide as dreams;
An ample sovereignty of eye and ear.
Rich are his walks with supernatural cheer;
The region of his inner spirit teems
With vital sounds and monitory gleams
Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
He the seven birds hath seen, that never part,
Seen the SEVEN WHISTLERS in their nightly rounds,
And counted them: and oftentimes will start, —
For overhead are sweeping GABRIEL'S HOUNDS,
Doomed, with their impious Lord, the flying Hart
To chase for ever, on aërial grounds!

XXX.

FOUR fiery steeds impatient of the rein
Whirled us o'er sunless ground beneath a sky
As void of sunshine, when, from that wide plain,
Clear tops of far-off mountains we descry,
Like a Sierra of cerulean Spain,
All light and lustre. Did no heart reply?
Yes, there was One; — for One, asunder fly

The thousand links of that ethereal chain;
And green vales open out, with grove and field,
And the fair front of many a happy Home;
Such tempting spots as into vision come
While soldiers, weary of the arms they wield
And sick at heart of strifeful Christendom,
Gaze on the moon by parting clouds revealed.

XXXI.

Brook! whose society the poet seeks,
Intent his wasted spirits to renew;
And whom the curious painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
And tracks thee dancing down thy water-breaks
If wish were mine some type of thee to view,
Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian artists, give thee human cheeks,
Channels for tears; no Naiad shouldst thou be, —
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints, nor hairs
It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
And hath bestowed on thee a safer good;
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

XXXII.

COMPOSED ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY STREAM.

Dogmatic Teachers, of the snow-white fur!
Ye wrangling Schoolmen, of the scarlet hood!

Who, with a keenness not to be withstood,
Press the point home, or falter and demur,
Checked in your course by many a teasing burr;
These natural council-seats your acrid blood
Might cool; — and, as the Genius of the flood
Stoops willingly to animate and spur
Each lighter function slumbering in the brain,
Yon eddying balls of foam, these arrowy gleams
That o'er the pavement of the surging streams
Welter and flash, a synod might detain
With subtle speculations, haply vain,
But surely less so than your far-fetched themes!

XXXIII.

This, and the two following, were suggested by Mr. W. Westall's Views of the Caves, etc., in Yorkshire.

PURE element of waters! wheresoe'er
Thou dost forsake thy subterranean haunts,
Green herbs, bright flowers, and berry-bearing plants
Rise into life and in thy train appear:
And, through the sunny portion of the year,
Swift insects shine, thy hovering pursuivants:
And, if thy bounty fail, the forest pants;
And hart and hind, and hunter with his spear,
Languish and droop together. Nor unfelt
In man's perturbèd soul thy sway benign;
And, haply, far within the marble belt
Of central earth, where tortured Spirits pine

For grace and goodness lost, thy murmurs melt
Their anguish, — and they blend sweet songs with thine.*

XXXIV.

MALHAM COVE.

Was the aim frustrated by force or guile,
When giants scooped from out the rocky ground,
Tier under tier, this semicirque profound?
(Giants, — the same who built in Erin's isle
That Causeway with incomparable toil!) —
O, had this vast theatric structure wound
With finished sweep into a perfect round,
No mightier work had gained the plausive smile
Of all-beholding Phœbus! But, alas!
Vain earth! false world! Foundations must be laid
In Heaven; for, 'mid the wreck of IS and WAS,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.

XXXV.

GORDALE.

At early dawn, or rather when the air
Glimmers with fading light, and shadowy Eve

* Waters (as Mr. Westall informs us in the letter-press prefixed to his admirable views) are invariably found to flow through these caverns.

Is busiest to confer and to bereave;
Then, pensive Votary! let thy feet repair
To Gordale chasm, terrific as the lair
Where the young lions couch; for so, by leave
Of the propitious hour, thou mayst perceive
The local Deity, with oozy hair
And mineral crown, beside his jagged urn
Recumbent: Him thou mayst behold, who hides
His lineaments by day, yet there presides,
Teaching the docile waters how to turn,
Or (if need be) impediment to spurn,
And force their passage to the salt-sea tides!

XXXVI.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1802.

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep,
In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

XXXVII.

CONCLUSION.

TO ——.

If these brief Records, by the Muses' art
Produced, as lonely Nature or the strife
That animates the scenes of public life *
Inspired, may in thy leisure claim a part;
And if these Transcripts of the private heart
Have gained a sanction from thy falling tears;
Then I repent not. But my soul hath fears
Breathed from eternity; for as a dart
Cleaves the blank air, Life flies: now every day
Is but a glimmering spoke in the swift wheel
Of the revolving week. Away, away,
All fitful cares, all transitory zeal!
So timely Grace the immortal wing may heal,
And honor rest upon the senseless clay.

PART III.

I.

Though the bold wings of Poesy affect
The clouds, and wheel around the mountain-tops

* This line alludes to Sonnets which will be found in another Class

Rejoicing, from her loftiest height she drops
Well pleased to skim the plain with wild-flowers deckt,
Or muse in solemn grove whose shades protect
The lingering dew,—there steals along, or stops
Watching the least small bird that round her hops,
Or creeping worm, with sensitive respect.
Her functions are they therefore less divine,
Her thoughts less deep, or void of grave intent
Her simplest fancies? Should that fear be thine,
Aspiring Votary, ere thy hand present
One offering, kneel before her modest shrine,
With brow in penitential sorrow bent!

II.

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820.

Ye sacred Nurseries of blooming Youth!
In whose collegiate shelter England's Flowers
Expand, enjoying through their vernal hours
The air of liberty, the light of truth;
Much have ye suffered from Time's gnawing tooth
Yet, O ye spires of Oxford! domes and towers!
Gardens and groves! your presence overpowers
The soberness of reason; till, in sooth,
Transformed, and rushing on a bold exchange,
I slight my own beloved Cam, to range
Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet;
Pace the long avenue, or glide adown
The stream-like windings of that glorious street,—
An eager Novice robed in fluttering gown!

III.

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820.

SHAME on this faithless heart! that could allow
Such transport, though but for a moment's space
Not while — to aid the spirit of the place —
The crescent moon clove with its glittering prow
The clouds, or night-bird sang from shady bough
But in plain daylight: — She, too, at my side,
Who, with her heart's experience satisfied,
Maintains inviolate its slightest vow!
Sweet Fancy! other gifts must I receive;
Proofs of a higher sovereignty I claim;
Take from *her* brow the withering flowers of eve,
And to that brow life's morning wreath restore;
Let *her* be comprehended in the frame
Of these illusions, or they please no more.

IV.

RECOLLECTION OF THE PORTRAIT OF KING HENRY EIGHTH, TRINITY LODGE, CAMBRIDGE.

THE imperial stature, the colossal stride,
Are yet before me; yet do I behold
The broad, full visage, chest of amplest mould,
The vestments 'broidered with barbaric pride:
And lo! a poniard, at the Monarch's side,
Hangs ready to be grasped in sympathy
With the keen threatenings of that fulgent eye,

Below the white-rimmed bonnet far descried.
Who trembles now at thy capricious mood?
'Mid those surrounding Worthies, haughty King,
We rather think, with grateful mind sedate,
How Providence educeth, from the spring
Of lawless will, unlooked-for streams of good,
Which neither force shall check nor time abate!

V.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MAJESTY (GEORGE THE THIRD).

WARD of the Law! — dread Shadow of a King!
Whose realm had dwindled to one stately room;
Whose universe was gloom immersed in gloom,
Darkness as thick as life o'er life could fling,
Save haply for some feeble glimmering
Of Faith and Hope, — if thou, by Nature's doom,
Gently hast sunk into the quiet tomb,
Why should we bend in grief, to sorrow cling,
When thankfulness were best? — Fresh-flowing tears,
Or, where tears flow not, sigh succeeding sigh,
Yield to such after-thought the sole reply
Which justly it can claim. The Nation hears
In this deep knell, silent for threescore years,
An unexampled voice of awful memory!

VI.

JUNE, 1820.

FAME tells of groves, — from England far away, —
* Groves that inspire the Nightingale to trill
And modulate, with subtle reach of skill
Elsewhere unmatched, her ever-varying lay;
Such bold report I venture to gainsay:
For I have heard the choir of Richmond Hill
Chanting, with indefatigable bill,
Strains that recalled to mind a distant day;
When, haply under shade of that same wood,
And scarcely conscious of the dashing oars
Plied steadily between those willowy shores,
The sweet-souled Poet of the Seasons stood, —
Listening, and listening long, in rapturous mood,
Ye heavenly Birds! to your Progenitors.

VII.

A PARSONAGE IN OXFORDSHIRE.

WHERE holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,
Is marked by no distinguishable line;
The turf unites, the pathways intertwine;
And, wheresoe'er the stealing footstep tends,
Garden, and that domain where kindred, friends,
And neighbors rest together, here confound

* Wallachia is the country alluded to.

Their several features, mingled like the sound
Of many waters, or as evening blends
With shady night. Soft airs, from shrub and flower,
Waft fragrant greetings to each silent grave;
And while those lofty poplars gently wave
Their tops, between them comes and goes a sky
Bright as the glimpses of eternity
To saints accorded in their mortal hour.

VIII.

COMPOSED AMONG THE RUINS OF A CASTLE IN NORTH WALES

THROUGH shattered galleries, 'mid roofless halls,
Wandering with timid footsteps oft betrayed,
The Stranger sighs, nor scruples to upbraid
Old Time, though he, gentlest among the Thralls
Of Destiny, upon these wounds hath laid
His lenient touches, soft as light that falls,
From the wan Moon, upon the towers and walls,
Light deepening the profoundest sleep of shade.
Relic of Kings! Wreck of forgotten wars,
To winds abandoned and the prying stars,
Time *loves* Thee! at his call the Seasons twine
Luxuriant wreaths around thy forehead hoar;
And, though past pomp no changes can restore,
A soothing recompense, his gift, is thine!

IX.

TO THE LADY E. B. AND THE HON. MISS P.

Composed in the Grounds of Plass Newidd, near Llangollen, 1824.

A STREAM, to mingle with your favorite Dee,
Along the VALE OF MEDITATION* flows;
So styled by those fierce Britons, pleased to see
In Nature's face the expression of repose;
Or haply there some pious hermit chose
To live and die, the peace of heaven his aim;
To whom the wild, sequestered region owes,
At this late day, its sanctifying name.
GLYN CAFAILLGAROCH, in the Cambrian tongue,
In ours, the VALE OF FRIENDSHIP, let *this* spot
Be named; where, faithful to a low-roofed Cot,
On Deva's banks, ye have abode so long;
Sisters in love, a love allowed to climb,
Even on this earth, above the reach of Time!

X.

TO THE TORRENT AT THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE, NORTH WALES 1824.

How art thou named? In search of what strange land,
From what huge height, descending? Can such force

* Glyn Myrvr.

Of waters issue from a British source,
Or hath not Pindus fed thee, where the band
Of Patriots scoop their freedom out, with hand
Desperate as thine? Or come the incessant shocks
From that young Stream, that smites the throbbing rocks
Of Viamala? There I seem to stand,
As in life's morn; permitted to behold,
From the dread chasm, woods climbing above woods,
In pomp that fades not; everlasting snows;
And skies that ne'er relinquish their repose;
Such power possess the family of floods
Over the minds of Poets, young or old!

XI.

IN THE WOODS OF RYDAL

Wild Redbreast! hadst thou at Jemima's lip
Pecked, as at mine, thus boldly, Love might say,
A half-blown rose had tempted thee to sip
Its glistening dews; but hallowed is the clay
Which the Muse warms; and I, whose head is gray,
Am not unworthy of thy fellowship;
Nor could I let one thought, one motion, slip
That might thy sylvan confidence betray.
For are we not all His without whose care
Vouchsafed no sparrow falleth to the ground;
Who gives his Angels wings to speed through air

And rolls the planets through the blue profound
Then peck or perch, fond Flutterer! nor forbear
To trust a Poet in still musings bound.

XII.

When Philoctetes in the Lemnian isle
Like a Form sculptured on a monument
Lay couched; on him or his dread bow unbent
Some wild Bird oft might settle, and beguile
The rigid features of a transient smile,
Disperse the tear, or to the sigh give vent,
Slackening the pains of ruthless banishment
From his lov'd home, and from heroic toil.
And trust that spiritual Creatures round us move,
Griefs to allay which Reason cannot heal;
Yea, veriest reptiles have sufficed to prove
To fettered wretchedness, that no Bastile
Is deep enough to exclude the light of love,
Though man for brother man has ceased to feel.

XIII.

While Anna's peers and early playmates tread,
In freedom, mountain-turf and river's marge,
Or float with music in the festal barge,
Rein the proud steed, or through the dance are led,
Her doom it is to press a weary bed, —
Till oft her guardian Angel, to some charge
More urgent called, will stretch his wings at large

And friends too rarely prop the languid head.
Yet, helped by Genius, untired comforter,
The presence even of a stuffed Owl for her
Can cheat the time; sending her fancy out
To ivied castles and to moonlight skies,
Though he can neither stir a plume, nor shout,
Nor veil, with restless film, his staring eyes.

XIV.

TO THE CUCKOO.

Not the whole warbling grove in concert heard,
When sunshine follows shower, the breast can thrill
Like the first summons, Cuckoo! of thy bill,
With its twin notes inseparably paired,
The captive 'mid damp vaults unsunned, unaired,
Measuring the periods of his lonely doom,
That cry can reach; and to the sick man's room
Sends gladness, by no languid smile declared.
The lordly eagle-race through hostile search
May perish; time may come when never more
The wilderness shall hear the lion roar;
But, long as cock shall crow from household perch
To rouse the dawn, soft gales shall speed thy wing,
And thy erratic voice be faithful to the Spring!

XV.

TO ——.

[Miss not the occasion: by the forelock take
That subtle Power, the never-halting Time,
Lest a mere moment's putting-off should make
Mischance almost as heavy as a crime.]

"WAIT, prithee, wait!" this answer Lesbia threw
Forth to her Dove, and took no further heed.
Her eye was busy, while her fingers flew
Across the harp, with soul-engrossing speed;
But from that bondage when her thoughts were freed
She rose, and toward the close-shut casement drew,
Whence the poor, unregarded Favorite, true
To old affections, had been heard to plead
With flapping wing for entrance. What a shriek
Forced from that voice so lately tuned to a strain
Of harmony! — a shriek of terror, pain,
And self-reproach! for, from aloft, a Kite
Pounced, — and the Dove, which from its ruthless beak
She could not rescue, perished in her sight!

XVI.

THE INFANT M—— M——.

UNQUIET Childhood here by special grace
Forgets her nature, opening like a flower

That neither feeds nor wastes its vital power
In painful struggles. Months each other chase,
And naught untunes that Infant's voice; no trace
Of fretful temper sullies her pure cheek;
Prompt, lively, self-sufficing, yet so meek
That one enrapt with gazing on her face
(Which even the placid innocence of death
Could scarcely make more placid, heaven more bright)
Might learn to picture, for the eye of faith,
The Virgin, as she shone with kindred light;
A nursling couched upon her mother's knee,
Beneath some shady palm of Galilee.

XVII.

TO ——, IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR.

Such age how beautiful! O Lady bright,
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
By favoring Nature and a saintly Mind
To something purer and more exquisite
Than flesh and blood! whene'er thou meet'st my sight,
When I behold thy blanched, unwithered cheek,
Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,
And head that droops because the soul is meek,
Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare;
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb
From desolation toward the genial prime;

Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
And filling more and more with crystal light
As pensive Evening deepens into night.

XVIII.

TO ROTHA Q——.

ROTHA, my Spiritual Child! this head was gray
When at the sacred font for thee I stood;
Pledged till thou reach the verge of womanhood,
And shalt become thy own sufficient stay:
Too late, I feel, sweet Orphan! was the day
For steadfast hope the contract to fulfil;
Yet shall my blessing hover o'er thee still,
Embodied in the music of this Lay,
Breathed forth beside the peaceful mountain Stream *
Whose murmur soothed thy languid Mother's ear
After her throes,—this Stream of name more dear
Since thou dost bear it,—a memorial theme
For others; for thy future self, a spell
To summon fancies out of Time's dark cell.

XIX.

A GRAVESTONE UPON THE FLOOR IN THE CLOISTERS OF WORCESTER CATHEDRAL.

"*MISERRIMUS!*" and neither name nor date,
Prayer, text, or symbol, graven upon the stone;

* The river Rotha, that flows into Windermere from the Lakes of Grasmere and Rydal.

Naught but that word assigned to the unknown,
That solitary word, — to separate
From all, and cast a cloud around the fate
Of him who lies beneath. Most wretched one,
Who chose his epitaph? — Himself alone
Could thus have dared the grave to agitate,
And claim, among the dead, this awful crown;
Nor doubt that He marked also for his own
Close to these cloistral steps a burial-place,
That every foot might fall with heavier tread,
Trampling upon his vileness. Stranger, pass
Softly! — To save the contrite, Jesus bled.

XX.

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES DISCOVERED AT BISHOPSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE.

While poring Antiquarians search the ground
Upturned with curious pains, the Bard, a Seer,
Takes fire: — The men that have been reappear
Romans for travel girt, for business gowned;
And some recline on couches, myrtle-crowned,
In festal glee: why not? For fresh and clear,
As if its hues were of the passing year,
Dawns this time-buried pavement. From that mound
Hoards may come forth of Trajans, Maximins,
Shrunk into coins with all their warlike toil:
Or a fierce impress issues with its foil

Of tenderness, — the Wolf, whose suckling Twins
The unlettered ploughboy pities when he wins
The casual treasure from the furrowed soil.

XXI.

1830.

CHATSWORTH! thy stately mansion, and the pride
Of thy domain, strange contrast do present
To house and home in many a craggy rent
Of the wild Peak; where new-born waters glide
Through fields whose thrifty occupants abide
As in a dear and chosen banishment,
With every semblance of entire content;
So kind is simple Nature, fairly tried!
Yet He whose heart in childhood gave her troth
To pastoral dales, thin-set with modest farms,
May learn, if judgment strengthen with his growth,
That not for Fancy only pomp hath charms;
And, strenuous to protect from lawless harms
The extremes of favored life, may honor both.

XXII.

A TRADITION OF OKER HILL IN DARLEY DALE, DERBYSHIRE.

'T IS said that to the brow of yon fair hill
Two Brothers clomb, and, turning face to face,
Nor one look more exchanging, grief to still
Or feed, each planted on that lofty place

A chosen Tree; then, eager to fulfil
Their courses, like two new-born rivers, they
In opposite directions urged their way
Down from the far-seen mount. No blast might kill
Or blight that fond memorial; — the trees grew,
And now entwine their arms; but ne'er again
Embraced those Brothers upon earth's wide plain;
Nor aught of mutual joy or sorrow knew
Until their spirits mingled in the sea
That to itself takes all, Eternity.

XXIII.

FILIAL PIETY.

(On the Way-side between Preston and Liverpool.)

Untouched through all severity of cold;
Inviolate, whate'er the cottage hearth
Might need for comfort, or for festal mirth,
That Pile of Turf is half a century old:
Yes, Traveller! fifty winters have been told
Since suddenly the dart of death went forth
Gainst him who raised it, — his last work on earth
Thence has it, with the Son, so strong a hold
Upon his Father's memory, that his hands,
Through reverence, touch it only to repair
Its waste. — Though crumbling with each breath of air,
In annual renovation thus it stands, —
Rude Mausoleum! but wrens nestle there,
And redbreasts warble when sweet sounds are rare.

XXIV.

TO THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT.

[Painted at Rydal Mount, by W. Pickersgill, Esq., for St John's College, Cambridge.]

Go, faithful Portrait! and where long hath knelt
Margaret, the saintly Foundress, take thy place;
And, if Time spare the colors for the grace
Which to the work surpassing skill hath dealt,
Thou, on thy rock reclined, though kingdoms melt
And states be torn up by the roots, wilt seem
To breathe in rural peace, to hear the stream,
And think and feel as once the Poet felt.
Whate'er thy fate, those features have not grown
Unrecognized through many a household tear,
More prompt, more glad, to fall than drops of dew
By morning shed around a flower half-blown;
Tears of delight, that testified how true
To life thou art, and, in thy truth, how dear!

XXV.

Why art thou silent? Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?
Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant
Bound to thy service with unceasing care,
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For naught but what thy happiness could spare.

Speak, — though this soft warm heart, once free to
hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold,
Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow
'Mid its own blush of leafless eglantine, —
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know!

XXVI.

TO B. R. HAYDON, ON SEEING HIS PICTURE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE ON THE ISLAND OF ST. HELENA.

HAYDON! let worthier judges praise the skill
Here by thy pencil shown in truth of lines
And charm of colors; *I* applaud those signs
Of thought, that give the true poetic thrill;
That unencumbered whole of blank and still,
Sky without cloud, ocean without a wave;
And the one Man that labored to enslave
The World, sole-standing high on the bare hill, —
Back turned, arms folded, the unapparent face
Tinged, we may fancy, in this dreary place
With light reflected from the invisible sun,
Set, like his fortunes; but not set for aye,
Like them. The unguilty Power pursues his way
And before *him* doth dawn perpetual run.

XXVII.

A POET! — He hath put his heart to school,
Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff

Which Art hath lodged within his hand, must laugh
By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
Because the lovely little flower is free
Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
But from its *own* divine vitality.

XXVIII.

The most alluring clouds that mount the sky
Owe to a troubled element their forms,
Their hues to sunset. If with raptured eye
We watch their splendor, shall we covet storms,
And wish the lord of day his slow decline
Would hasten, that such pomp may float on high
Behold, already they forget to shine,
Dissolve, — and leave to him who gazed a sigh.
Not loth to thank each moment for its boon
Of pure delight, come whensoe'er it may,
Peace let us seek, — to steadfast things attune
Calm expectations, leaving to the gay
And volatile their love of transient bowers,
The house that cannot pass away be ours.

XXIX.

IN A PORTRAIT OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON UPON THE FIELD OF WATERLOO, BY HAYDON.

By Art's bold privilege Warrior and War-horse stand
On ground yet strewn with their last battle's wreck;
Let the Steed glory while his Master's hand
Lies fixed for ages on his conscious neck;
But by the Chieftain's look, though at his side
Hangs that day's treasured sword, how firm a check
Is given to triumph and all human pride!
Yon trophied Mound shrinks to a shadowy speck
In his calm presence! Him the mighty deed
Elates not, brought far nearer the grave's rest,
As shows that time-worn face, for he such seed
Has shown as yields, we trust, the fruit of fame
In Heaven; hence no one blushes for thy name,
Conqueror, 'mid some sad thoughts, divinely blest

XXX.

COMPOSED ON A MAY MORNING, 1838.

Life with yon Lambs, like day, is just begun,
Yet Nature seems to them a heavenly guide.
Does joy approach? they meet the coming tide;
And sullenness avoid, as now they shun
Pale twilight's lingering glooms, — and in the sun
Couch near their dams, with quiet satisfied;

Or gambol, each with his shadow at his side,
Varying its shape wherever he may run.
As they from turf yet hoar with sleepy dew
All turn, and court the shining and the green,
Where herbs look up, and opening flowers are seen
Why to God's goodness cannot We be true,
And so, His gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new?

XXXI.

Lo! where she stands fixed in a saint-like trance,
One upward hand, as if she needed rest
From rapture, lying softly on her breast!
Nor wants her eyeball an ethereal glance;
But not the less — nay, more — that countenance,
While thus illumined, tells of painful strife
For a sick heart made weary of this life
By love, long crossed with adverse circumstance.
— Would she were now as when she hoped to pass
At God's appointed hour to them who tread
Heaven's sapphire pavement, yet breathed well content,
Well pleased, her foot should print earth's common grass,
Lived thankful for day's light, for daily bread,
For health, and time in obvious duty spent.

XXXII.

TO A PAINTER.

ALL praise the Likeness by thy skill portrayed;
But 't is a fruitless task to paint for me,
Who, yielding not to changes Time has made,
By the habitual light of memory see
Eyes unbedimmed, see bloom that cannot fade,
And smiles that from their birthplace ne'er shall flee
Into the land where ghosts and phantoms be;
And, seeing this, own nothing in its stead.
Couldst thou go back into far-distant years,
Or share with me, fond thought! that inward eye,
Then, and then only, Painter! could thy Art
The visual powers of Nature satisfy,
Which hold, whate'er to common sight appears,
Their sovereign empire in a faithful heart.

XXXIII.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

THOUGH I beheld at first with blank surprise
This Work I now have gazed on it so long
I see its truth with unreluctant eyes;
O my Belovèd! I have done thee wrong,
Conscious of blessedness, but whence it sprung
Ever too heedless, as I now perceive:

Morn into noon did pass, noon into eve,
And the old day was welcome as the young,
As welcome, and as beautiful, — in sooth
More beautiful, as being a thing more holy:
Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth
Of all thy goodness, never melancholy;
To thy large heart and humble mind, that cast
Into one vision future, present, past.

XXXIV

Hark! 't is the Thrush, undaunted, undeprest,
By twilight premature of cloud and rain;
Nor does that roaring wind deaden his strain
Who carols thinking of his Love and nest,
And seems, as more incited, still more blest.
Thanks; thou hast snapped a fireside Prisoner's chain,
Exulting Warbler! eased a fretted brain,
And in a moment charmed my cares to rest.
Yes, I will forth, bold Bird! and front the blast,
That we may sing together, if thou wilt,
So loud, so clear, my Partner through life's day,
Mute in her nest love-chosen, if not love-built
Like thine, shall gladden, as in seasons past,
Thrilled by loose snatches of the social Lay.

Rydal Mount, 1838.

XXXV.

'T is He whose yester-evening's high disdain
Beat back the roaring storm, — but how subdued
His day-break note, a sad vicissitude!
Does the hour's drowsy weight his glee restrain?
Or, like the nightingale, her joyous vein
Pleased to renounce, does this dear Thrush attune
His voice to suit the temper of yon Moon
Doubly depressed, setting, and in her wane?
Rise, tardy Sun! and let the songster prove
(The balance trembling between night and morn
No longer) with what ecstasy upborne
He can pour forth his spirit. In heaven above,
And earth below, they best can serve true gladness
Who meet most feelingly the calls of sadness.

XXXVI.

O what a Wreck! how changed in mien and speech!
Yet — though dread Powers, that work in mystery, spin
Entanglings of the brain, though shadows stretch
O'er the chilled heart — reflect; far, far within
Hers is a holy Being, freed from Sin.
She is not what she seems, a forlorn wretch,
But delegated Spirits comfort fetch
To her from heights that Reason may not win.
Like Children, she is privileged to hold

Divine communion; both to live and move,
Whate'er to shallow Faith their ways unfold,
Inly illumined by Heaven's pitying love;
Love pitying innocence not long to last,
In them, — in her our sins and sorrows past.

XXXVII.

INTENT on gathering wool from hedge and brake,
Yon busy Little-ones rejoice that soon
A poor old Dame will bless them for the boon:
Great is their glee while flake they add to flake,
With rival earnestness; far other strife
Than will hereafter move them, if they make
Pastime their idol, give their day of life
To pleasure snatched for reckless pleasure's sake.
Can pomp and show allay one heart-born grief?
Pains which the World inflicts can she requite?
Not for an interval however brief;
The silent thoughts that search for steadfast light,
Love from her depths, and Duty in her might,
And Faith, — these only yield secure relief.

March 8th, 1842.

XXXVIII.

A PLEA FOR AUTHORS, MAY, 1838.

FAILING impartial measure to dispense
To every suitor, Equity is lame;
And social Justice, stripped of reverence

For natural rights, a mockery and a shame;
Law but a servile dupe of false pretence,
If, guarding grossest things from common claim
Now and for ever, she, to works that came
From mind and spirit, grudge a short-lived fence.
" What! lengthened privilege, a lineal tie,
For *Books!* Yes, heartless Ones, or be it proved
That 't is a fault in Us to have lived and loved
Like others, with like temporal hopes to die;
No public harm that Genius from her course
Be turned; and streams of truth dried up, even at
their source!

XXXIX.

VALEDICTORY SONNET.

Closing the Volume of Sonnets published in 1838.

SERVING no haughty Muse, my hands have here
Disposed some cultured Flowerets (drawn from
spots
Where they bloomed singly, or in scattered knots)
Each kind in several beds of one parterre;
Both to allure the casual Loiterer,
And that, so placed, my Nurslings may requite
Studious regard with opportune delight,
Nor be unthanked, unless I fondly err.
But metaphor dismissed, and thanks apart,
Reader, farewell! My last words let them be,—
If in this book Fancy and Truth agree;
If simple Nature trained by careful Art

Through It have won a passage to thy heart;
Grant me thy love, I crave no other fee!

XL.

TO THE REV. CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, D.D., MASTER OF HARROW SCHOOL,

After the perusal of his Theophilus Anglicanus, recently published.

ENLIGHTENED Teacher, gladly from thy hand
Have I received this proof of pains bestowed
By thee to guide thy Pupils on the road
That, in our native isle, and every land,
The Church, when trusting in divine command
And in her Catholic attributes, hath trod:
O may these lessons be with profit scanned
To thy heart's wish, thy labor blest by God!
So the bright faces of the young and gay
Shall look more bright, — the happy, happier still
Catch, in the pauses of their keenest play,
Motions of thought which elevate the will,
And, like the Spire that from your classic Hill
Points heavenward, indicate the end and way.

Rydal Mount, Dec. 11, 1843.

XLI.

TO THE PLANET VENUS,

Upon its approximation (as an Evening Star) to the Earth Jan. 1838.

WHAT strong allurement draws, what spirit guides
Thee, Vesper! brightening still, as if the nearer

Thou com'st to man's abode the spot grew dearer
Night after night? True is it Nature hides
Her treasures less and less. — Man now presides
In power, where once he trembled in his weakness;
Science advances with gigantic strides;
But are we aught enriched in love and meekness?
Aught dost thou see, bright Star! of pure and wise
More than in humbler times graced human story;
That makes our hearts more apt to sympathize
With heaven, our souls more fit for future glory,
When earth shall vanish from our closing eyes,
Ere we lie down in our last dormitory?

XLII.

WANSFELL! * this Household has a favored lot,
Living with liberty on thee to gaze,
To watch while Morn first crowns thee with her rays,
Or when along thy breast serenely float
Evening's angelic clouds. Yet ne'er a note
Hath sounded (shame upon the Bard!) thy praise
For all that thou, as if from heaven, hast brought
Of glory lavished on our quiet days.
Bountiful Son of Earth! when we are gone
From every object dear to mortal sight,
As soon we shall be, may these words attest
How oft, to elevate our spirits, shone

* The Hill that rises to the southeast, above Ambleside

Thy visionary majesties of light,
How in thy pensive glooms our hearts found rest.

Dec. 24, 1842.

XLIII.

While beams of orient light shoot wide and high
Deep in the vale a little rural Town *
Breathes forth a cloud-like creature of its own,
That mounts not toward the radiant morning sky
But, with a less ambitious sympathy,
Hangs o'er its Parent waking to the cares,
Troubles, and toils that every day prepares.
So Fancy, to the musing Poet's eye,
Endears that Lingerer. And how blest her sway
(Like influence never may my soul reject)
If the calm Heaven, now to its zenith decked
With glorious forms in numberless array,
To the lone shepherd on the hills disclose
Gleams from a world in which the saints repose.

Jan. 1, 1843.

XLIV.

In my mind's eye a Temple, like a cloud
Slowly surmounting some invidious hill
Rose out of darkness: the bright Work stood still
And might of its own beauty have been proud,

* Ambleside.

But it was fashioned and to God was vowed
By Virtues that diffused, in every part,
Spirit divine through forms of human art:
Faith had her arch, — her arch, when winds blow loud,
Into the consciousness of safety thrilled;
And Love her towers of dread foundation laid
Under the grave of things; Hope had her spire
Star-high, and pointing still to something higher:
Trembling I gazed, but heard a voice, — it said,
"Hell-gates are powerless Phantoms when we build."

XLV.

ON THE PROJECTED KENDAL AND WINDERMERE RAILWAY

Is then no nook of English ground secure
From rash assault? * Schemes of retirement sown
In youth, and 'mid the busy world kept pure
As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown,
Must perish; — how can they this blight endure?

* The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be overrated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbor of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. "Fell it!" exclaimed the yeoman, "I had rather fall on my knees and worship it." It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling.

And must he too the ruthless change bemoan
Who scorns a false utilitarian lure
'Mid his paternal fields at random thrown?
Baffle the threat, bright Scene, from Orrest-head
Given to the pausing traveller's rapturous glance;
Plead for thy peace, thou beautiful romance
Of nature; and, if human hearts be dead,
Speak, passing winds; ye torrents, with your strong
And constant voice, protest against the wrong.

October 12th, 1844.

XLVI.

Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,
Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,
Intrenched your brows; ye gloried in each scar:
Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst of Gold,
That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star,
Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold,
And clear way made for her triumphal car
Through the beloved retreats your arms enfold!
Heard ye that Whistle? As her long-linked Train
Swept onwards, did the vision cross your view?
Yes, ye were startled; — and, in balance true
Weighing the mischief with the promised gain,
Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you
To share the passion of a just disdain.

XLVII.

AT FURNESS ABBEY.

HERE, where, of havoc tired and rash undoing,
Man left this Structure to become Time's prey,
A soothing spirit follows in the way
That Nature takes, her counter-work pursuing.
See how her Ivy clasps the sacred Ruin,
Fall to prevent or beautify decay;
And, on the mouldered walls, how bright, how gay,
The flowers in pearly dews their bloom renewing!
Thanks to the place, blessings upon the hour;
Even as I speak, the rising Sun's first smile
Gleams on the grass-crowned top of yon tall Tower
Whose cawing occupants with joy proclaim
Prescriptive title to the shattered pile
Where, Cavendish, *thine* seems nothing but name!

XLVIII.

AT FURNESS ABBEY.

WELL have yon Railway Laborers to THIS ground
Withdrawn for noontide rest. They sit, they walk
Among the Ruins, but no idle talk
Is heard; to grave demeanor all are bound;
And from one voice a Hymn with tuneful sound
Hallows once more the long-deserted Choir,
And thrills the old, sepulchral earth around.

Others look up, and with fixed eyes admire
That wide-spanned arch, wondering how it was
raised,
To keep, so high in air, its strength and grace:
All seem to feel the spirit of the place,
And by the general reverence God is praised:
Profane Despoilers, stand ye not reproved,
While thus these simple-hearted men are moved?

June 21st, 1845.

NOTES.

Page 82.

"*To the Daisy.*"

This Poem, and two others to the same Flower, were written in the year 1802; which is mentioned, because in some of the ideas, though not in the manner in which those ideas are connected, and likewise even in some of the expressions, there is a resemblance to passages in a Poem (lately published) of Mr. Montgomery's, entitled, A Field Flower. This being said, Mr. Montgomery will not think any apology due to him; I cannot, however, help addressing him in the words of the Father of English Poets.

> "Though it happe me to rehersin —
> That ye han in your freshe songis saied,
> Forberith me, and beth not ill apaied,
> Sith that ye se I doe it in the honour
> Of Love, and eke in service of the Flour."
>
> 1807.

Page 46.

"*The Seven Sisters.*"

The Story of this Poem is from the German of FREDERICA BRUN.

Page 85.

"*The Wagoner.*"

Several years after the event that forms the subject of the Poem, in company with my friend, the late Mr. Coleridge, I happened to fall in with the person to whom the name of Ben-

jamin is given. Upon our expressing regret that we had not, for a long time, seen upon the road either him or his wagon, he said: "They could not do without me; and as to the man who was put in my place, no good could come out of him; he was a man of no *ideas*."

The fact of my discarded hero's getting the horses out of a great difficulty with a word, as related in the Poem, was told me by an eyewitness.

Page 85.

"*The buzzing Dor-hawk, round and round, is wheeling.*"

When the Poem was first written the note of the bird was thus described: —

"The Night-hawk is singing his frog-like tune,
Twirling his watchman's rattle about —"

but from unwillingness to startle the reader at the outset by so bold a mode of expression, the passage was altered as it now stands.

Page 103.

After the line, "*Can any mortal clog come to her?*" followed in the MS. an incident which has been kept back. Part of the suppressed verses shall here be given, as a gratification of private feeling, which the well-disposed reader will find no difficulty in excusing. They are now printed for the first time.

"Can any mortal clog come to her?
It can:
. . . . .
But Benjamin, in his vexation,
Possesses inward consolation;
He knows his ground, and hopes to find
A spot with all things to his mind,
An upright mural block of stone,
Moist with pure water trickling down.
A slender spring; but kind to man
It is, a true Samaritan;
Close to the highway, pouring out

Its offering from a chink or spout;
Whence all, howe'er athirst, or drooping
With toil, may drink, and without stooping

Cries Benjamin, 'Where is it, where?
Voice it hath none, but must be near.'
— A star, declining towards the west,
Upon the watery surface threw
Its image tremulously imprest,
That just marked out the object and withdrew:
Right welcome service!

. . . . . .

Rock of Names!
Light is the strain, but not unjust
To thee, and thy memorial-trust
That once seemed only to express
Love that was love in idleness;
Tokens, as year hath followed year
How changed, alas! in character!
For they were graven on thy smooth breast
By hands of those my soul loves best;
Meek women, men as true and brave
As ever went to a hopeful grave:
Their hands and mine, when side by side,
With kindred zeal and mutual pride,
We worked until the Initials took
Shapes that defied a scornful look. —
Long as for us a genial feeling
Survives, or one in need of healing,
The power, dear Rock, around thee cast,
Thy monumental power, shall last
For me and mine! O thought of pain,
That would impair it or profane!
Take all in kindness then, as said
With a staid heart but playful head;
And fail not thou, loved Rock! to keep
Thy charge when we are laid asleep."

Page 179.

"Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle."

Henry Lord Clifford, &c., &c., who is the subject of this Poem was the son of John Lord Clifford, who was slain at Towton Field, which John Lord Clifford, as is known to the reader o English History, was the person who after the battle of Wake field slew, in the pursuit, the young Earl of Rutland, son of the Duke of York, who had fallen in the battle, "in part of re venge" (say the Authors of the History of Cumberland ar Westmoreland); "for the Earl's father had slain his." A dee which worthily blemished the author (saith Speed); but who as he adds, "dare promise anything temperate of himself in the heat of martial fury? chiefly, when it was resolved not to leave any branch of the York line standing; for so one maketh this Lord to speak." This, no doubt, I would observe by the by, was an action sufficiently in the vindictive spirit of the times, and yet not altogether so bad as represented; "for the Earl was no child, as some writers would have him, but able to bear arms, being sixteen or seventeen years of age, as is evident from this, (say the Memoirs of the Countess of Pembroke, who was laudably anxious to wipe away, as far as could be, this stigma from the illustrious name to which she was born,) that he was the next child to King Edward the Fourth, which his mother had by Richard Duke of York, and that King was then eighteen years of age: and for the small distance betwixt her children, see Austin Vincent, in his Book of Nobility, p. 622, where he writes of them all. It may further be observed, that Lord Clifford, who was then himself only twenty-five years of age, had been a leading man and commander, two or three years together, in the army of Lancaster, before this time; and, therefore, would be less likely to think that the Earl of Rutland might be entitled to mercy from his youth. — But, independent of this act, at best a cruel and savage one, the Family of Clifford had done enough to draw upon them the vehement hatred of the House of York: so that after the Battle of Towton there was no hope for them but in flight and concealment. Henry the subject of the Poem, was deprived of his estate and honors during the space of twenty-four years; all which time he lived

as a shepherd in Yorkshire or in Cumberland, where the estate of his father-in-law (Sir Lancelot Threlkeld) lay. He was restored to his estate and honors in the first year of Henry the Seventh. It is recorded that, "when called to Parliament, he behaved nobly and wisely; but otherwise came seldom to London or the Court; and rather delighted to live in the country, where he repaired several of his Castles, which had gone to decay during the late troubles." Thus far is chiefly collected from Nicholson and Burn; and I can add, from my own knowledge, that there is a tradition current in the village of Threlkeld and its neighborhood, his principal retreat, that, in the course of his shepherd life, he had acquired great astronomical knowledge. I cannot conclude this note without adding a word upon the subject of those numerous and noble feudal edifices, spoken of in the Poem, the ruins of some of which are, at this day, so great an ornament to that interesting country. The Cliffords had always been distinguished for an honorable pride in these Castles; and we have seen that, after the wars of York and Lancaster, they were rebuilt; in the civil wars of Charles the First they were again laid waste, and again restored almost to their former magnificence by the celebrated Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Pembroke, &c., &c. Not more than twenty-five years after this was done, when the estates of Clifford had passed into the Family of Tufton, three of these Castles, namely, Brough, Brougham, and Pendragon, were demolished, and the timber and other materials sold by Thomas Earl of Thanet. We will hope that, when this order was issued, the Earl had not consulted the text of Isaiah, 58th chap. 12th verse, to which the inscription placed over the gate of Pendragon Castle, by the Countess of Pembroke (I believe his grandmother), at the time she repaired that structure, refers the reader: — "*And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breech, the restorer of paths to dwell in.*" The Earl of Thanet, the present possessor of the Estates, with a due respect for the memory of his ancestors, and a proper sense of the value and beauty of these remains of antiquity, has (I am told) given orders that they should be preserved from all depredations.

Page 180.

"*Earth helped him with the cry of blood.*"

This line is from "The Battle of Bosworth Field," by Sir John Beaumont (brother to the Dramatist), whose poems are written with much spirit, elegance, and harmony; and have deservedly been reprinted lately in Chalmers's Collection of English Poets.

Page 183.

"*And both the undying Fish that swim*
Through Bowscale-Tarn," *&c.*

It is imagined by the people of the country that there are two immortal Fish, inhabitants of this Tarn, which lies in the mountains not far from Threlkeld. — Blencathara, mentioned before, is the old and proper name of the mountain vulgarly called Saddle-back.

Page 184.

"*Armor rusting in his halls*
On the blood of Clifford calls."

The martial character of the Cliffords is well known to the readers of English history; but it may not be improper here to say, by way of comment on these lines and what follows, that, besides several others who perished in same manner, the four immediate progenitors of the person in whose hearing this is supposed to be spoken, all died in the field.

Page 204.

"*Dion.*"

This poem began with the following stanza, which has been displaced on account of its detaining the reader too long from the subject, and as rather precluding, than preparing for, the due effect of the allusion to the genius of Plato: —

Fair is the Swan, whose majesty, prevailing
O'er breezeless water, on Locarno's lake,
Bears him on while proudly sailing

He leaves behind a moon-illumined wake:
Behold! the mantling spirit of reserve
Fashions his neck into a goodly curve;
An arch thrown back between luxuriant wings
Of whitest garniture, like fir-tree boughs
To which, on some unruffled morning, clings
A flaky weight of winter's purest snows!
— Behold! — as with a gushing impulse heaves
That downy prow, and softly cleaves
The mirror of the crystal flood,
Vanish inverted hill, and shadowy wood,
And pendent rocks, where'er, in gliding state,
Winds the mute Creature without visible Mate
Or Rival, save the Queen of night
Showering down a silver light,
From heaven, upon her chosen Favorite!

Page 216.

"*Living hill.*"

"Awhile the living hill
Heaved with convulsive throes, and all was still."
DR. DARWIN.

Page 233.

"*The Wishing-Gate.*"

"In the Vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old highway leading to Ambleside, is a gate which, time out of mind, has been called the Wishing Gate."

Having been told, upon what I thought good authority, that this gate had been destroyed, and the opening where it hung walled up, I gave vent immediately to my feelings in these stanzas. But going to the place some time after, I found, with much delight, my old favorite unmolested.

Page 320.

"*Something less than joy, but more than dull content.*"
COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA.

Page 373.

"*Wild Redbreast,*" *&c.*

This Sonnet, as Poetry, explains itself, yet the scene of the incident having been a wild wood, it may be doubted, as a point of natural history, whether the bird was aware that his attentions were bestowed upon a human, or even a living creature. But a Redbreast will perch upon the foot of a gardener at work, and alight on the handle of the spade when his hand is half upon it; — this I have seen. And under my own roof I have witnessed affecting instances of the creature's friendly visits to the chambers of sick persons, as described in the verses to the Redbreast, p. 373, Vol. I. One of these welcome intruders used frequently to roost upon a nail in the wall, from which a picture had hung, and was ready, as morning came, to pipe his song in the hearing of the Invalid, who had been long confined to her room. These attachments to a particular person, when marked and continued, used to be reckoned ominous; but the superstition is passing away.

END OF VOL. II.

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